

**Written in Black and White: Creating an Ideal America, 1919-1970**

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### Abstract

This project juxtaposes the careers of three unique publishers in order to analyze how the twentieth century public sphere gave publishers new pathways to prominence, an ability to cultivate personal audiences based on ideology, and wide latitude to express personal visions for America. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, a socialist sympathizer and the son of Russian immigrants, founded Haldeman-Julius Publishing in 1919 and advocated a rational reordering of American society. Haldeman-Julius used nationwide mass-marketing, multiple periodical publications, and the popular Little Blue Book series to vigorously challenge conservative views on sexuality, religion, labor, race, and education. Further challenging the exclusionary characteristics of American society, the African American newspaperman Chester Franklin founded the *Kansas City Call* in 1919 and championed racial uplift through hard work, self-reliance, and education. He expanded the paper throughout the Midwest and gave a voice to campaigns for integration and improved working conditions in the region. Finally, native Kansan William Lindsay White used the combination of national and local platforms to articulate a conservative vision for America based on a return to traditional values. Specifically, his writing advocated hard work and self-reliance along with an emphasis on anti-communism. Despite his traditionalism, however, he envisioned an American society that granted equal opportunities to African Americans and immigrants who embraced these values. The success of each publisher depended upon individual initiative, career opportunism, and community commitment. Each pursued an audience outside his local community and, collectively, they demonstrate how the printed word became a tool of advocacy for competing social and political agendas during the twentieth century.

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## Introduction

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, Chester A. Franklin, and William Lindsay White considered themselves the discoverers of truth, the defenders of public interest, and the voices of their respective audiences. In other words, they considered themselves journalists. Haldeman-Julius explained in 1935, “I look on the printing press as a weapon to fight with, not as a toy. I look on myself as something of a teacher, and to my notion a teacher should always be hot for his subjects, militant.”<sup>1</sup> Franklin, a prominent African-American businessman, stressed the purpose of his publication, *The Kansas City Call*, in an editorial titled “The Press is to Safeguard the People.” He hoped that “Kansas City may see what is the proper intention of THE CALL . . . our duty is to publish the facts. Opinion and cheap rumor are not our province, but facts are.”<sup>2</sup> Franklin linked his publication to the local community when he asserted that “a free and fearless press is the chief safeguard of our people, and we shall do our full duty as a newspaper.”<sup>3</sup> White felt a similar responsibility to provide his audience with unvarnished truths and objective analyses. He struck back against critics who claimed his *Report on the Russians* reflected a political agenda rather than actual conditions within Russia. He argued, “It is all right if the current B picture at the neighborhood movie tells the audience what they want to hear at just the right time they want to hear it . . . a reporter must on occasion warn his readers of dangers ahead, even when they do not want to see them.”<sup>4</sup>

Considered collectively, the written products and public personas of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, Chester A. Franklin, and William Lindsay White demonstrate that the early twentieth-century gave publishers new pathways to prominence, an ability to cultivate personal audiences

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<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Goldberg. 27 June 1935. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

<sup>2</sup> Chester Franklin, “The Press is to Safeguard the People,” *Kansas City Call*, February 15, 1924.

<sup>3</sup> Chester Franklin, “News Service Reflects the Opinions of the People,” *Kansas City Call*, February 15, 1924.

<sup>4</sup> William Lindsay White, “Report to the Critics,” *Saturday Review*, October 5, 1946, 15.

based on ideology, and wide latitude to express personal visions for America. These efforts, coupled with an enthusiasm for social change, allowed each to spread his ideas beyond a local audience and gave each an avenue for influence. The three individuals examined within this study shared an involvement in the publishing world and a common desire to influence their audience. Their publications, editorials, books, and business dealings centered on issues each found important: race equality, foreign policy, communism, capitalism, and individualism. Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White based their editorial perspectives on individual experience and personal belief. Each man's Midwest location provided an outsider's perspective on the impact of rapid change within American society and prompted each to pursue a radically different strategy to access the public sphere. Their writing focused on issues of central importance to an America that was expanding in population, while also struggling with economic stability and redefining social opportunity. Unfortunately, their Kansas roots have also kept their careers out of historiographical analyses of American journalism.

Each man's agenda and positions on these issues differed because each represented a distinct strand of the American experience. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, born in Philadelphia in 1889, was the son of Jewish Russian immigrants. His life story embodies the Horatio Alger up-by-the-bootstraps American dream. From humble beginnings, and through an almost entirely self-guided education, he came of age during a period in American history that witnessed the end of westward expansion and increasing urbanization. He thrived at numerous publications before founding a publishing venture that would sell millions of Little Blue Books. The obstacles overcome by Chester Franklin, born in 1880, stemmed not from lack of education but from race. Franklin worked tirelessly throughout his life to demonstrate the African American's ability to meet established social expectations. His entrance into the newspaper business resulted from a

desire to fulfill a community need. Finally, William Lindsay White, born in 1900, represented the next generation. Rather than establishing his own publishing platform, White followed in his father's footsteps at the *Emporia Gazette* and later joined *The Reader's Digest*, which had been founded in 1922 by DeWitt Wallace. The background of each author influenced his career trajectory and his ideological beliefs. The divergent experience of Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White demonstrates the diversity of the American public discourse because it illustrates how the public sphere provided each a relationship with a broad readership.

The early twentieth century ushered in a great expansion, and shift, in America's population. Between 1890 and 1920 the country's population more than doubled. Further, the 1920 census recorded for the first time more than one-half of the American nation residing in "urban" environments.<sup>5</sup> Primarily known for agrarian production and as a setting for pre-Civil War frontier strife, Kansas grew exponentially during the early twentieth century and experienced an industrial boom. The changes in Kansas mirrored population shifts within the rest of the country and this growth widened the local audiences available to Kansas publishers. As the state's population expanded it also shifted away from the farm: "between 1900 and 1910 the population of the state defined by the census as urban increased 49 percent, from 330,000 to 492,000. By 1920, it increased by another 120,000, or 25 percent," notes Craig Miner.<sup>6</sup> During subsequent decades, Kansas's population growth ebbed, but gradually continued at around four to six percent per year.<sup>7</sup> As a result, Kansas publishers were delighted to find their local audiences expanding and the demand for news growing. Chapters one through three detail the

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<sup>5</sup> Lynn Dumenil, *Modern Temper: American Culture and Society in the 1920s* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1995), 11. She notes that "this was a dubious statistic, since the Census Bureau used a population of 2,500 people as the cutoff for 'urban.'"

<sup>6</sup> Craig Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2002). 226.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, 405. Miner notes that in the 1950s Kansas again approached 15 percent growth as it had been between 1900 and 1910.

population shifts within southeast Kansas, the Kansas City area, and Emporia, outlining the size and characteristics of each publisher's respective audience. A local population's idiosyncrasies had a profound impact upon the acceptance, or vilification, the publisher experienced. As a result, this relationship often determined the editorial flexibility and revenue base each publisher enjoyed.

As the early twentieth century ushered in population growth for the United States, it brought with it a new era of possibility and thrust together diverse groups of people in new ways. Published in 1967, Robert Wiebe's *The Search for Order, 1877-1920* has shaped historians understanding of this period for a generation. Wiebe argued that increasing urbanization and diversity required that America adopt a more impersonal and "professional" model of organization. Rural America and non-urban areas, which he termed "island communities," witnessed their previous isolation end as cities grew and communication technology fostered the faster spread of information. As a result, "island communities" became exposed to a wide variety of beliefs and were forced to grapple with a rapidly changing culture.<sup>8</sup> The conflict between tradition and modernity took several forms in Wiebe's view – especially in the realm of the professional trades and government power – but ultimately helped America's diverse population coalesce and move toward a truly national culture.<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York, NY: Hill and Wang, 1967). Also, see Dumenil, 202. Dumenil's synthesis of the early twentieth century, while breaking no new theoretical ground, connects Wiebe's notion of "island communities" and the increasing interplay of peoples to the rising clash between modernism and fundamentalism. In addition, her work provides a useful example of how diverse strands of American culture can be connected through historical inquiry. In terms of the interplay between diverse groups during this period, see also Maureen Flanagan, *America reformed: Progressives and progressivisms, 1890s-1920s* (New York, NY: Oxford Press, 2007).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., 2-10. Also, see Dumenil, 4. She asserts that "the multiplication of national bureaucratic structures – of voluntary associations, professional organizations, and corporations – led to an organized society in which both individuals and communities found themselves powerfully affected by forces outside their control and increasingly removed from the locus of economic and political power."



Within the shift toward professionalism and a national culture, purveyors of information standardized their business practices and played an increasingly large role in molding public opinion. With vast expansion came a corresponding power to shape popular discourse and American society. Wiebe asserted that journalists entering the profession in the early 1900s sought to redefine the profession and “as muckrackers and social analysts, many would fill critical functions for their new-middle-class audience. . . they were men with a mission, seeking ways to use what they regarded as a scientific method of reporting.”<sup>10</sup> This cadre of reform-minded journalists within the first two decades of the twentieth century successfully advocated changes in a variety of industries and social settings.<sup>11</sup> These journalists, whose numbers grew, influenced future generations and set a precedent for journalistic rabble-rousing leading to political change. In Kansas, journalism provided individuals an opportunity to enhance their local community’s reputation within the state and establish for themselves an enhanced local, or even a national, reputation. Miner asserts that the early twentieth century witnessed a growing number of Kansas editors who used their publications to advocate political issues and work toward meaningful reforms. He recognizes William Allen White and Arthur Capper as the most prominent of this initial generation of journalists, but also notes that a number of other individuals pursued similar career paths. Miner argues that this group of Kansas journalists “pioneered in seeing global significance in the local, in collecting statistics, in doing what might now be called ‘investigative reporting,’ and in crusading for effective change across the street as well as in Topeka and Washington.”<sup>12</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius and Chester A. Franklin rose to

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<sup>10</sup> Wiebe, 120.

<sup>11</sup> Wiebe, 198-199. He argues that “this growing sense of interrelatedness owed a good deal to the network of communications that had spread about progressivism. Enterprising journalists had quickly uncovered the early reforms and reported their findings in rich detail. These muckracking pieces, directed to a literate middle-class audience, were especially important in the first years of discovery.”

<sup>12</sup> Miner, 201.

prominence a decade after William Allen White and Capper to establish their own platforms for advocacy and pursue similar reform efforts. William Lindsay White continued his father's tradition of rabble-rousing at the *Emporia Gazette* while also establishing his own identity.

As Americans shifted towards a more national culture, the processes through which culture formed and ideas were shared expanded dramatically. Thus, a full understanding of American society in the twentieth century requires an analysis of the interplay between the individual, society, and the mechanisms through which Americans exchanged information. How did issues that routinely served as press fodder, such as ideal gender roles, racial identity, economic arrangements, and even patriotism, lead to the formation of a national culture? How did a publisher's desire for profit necessitate the identification, and sometimes creation, of an audience for his product? Moreover, how did American discourse evolve in the twentieth century as the culture and society became simultaneously national and increasingly diverse? Answers to these questions require not only extensive examination of primary texts and the motivations of Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White, but also an engagement with the theories of Jürgen Habermas, Thomas Bender, and Benedict Anderson.

Jürgen Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere*, written in 1962 but not translated into English until 1989, asserted that open and public discourse played an integral role in the creation of culture. Habermas based his study, which specifically focused on Western Europe, on an examination of the topics that dominated public discussion, the demographic qualities of public sphere participants, and the physical locations used for free exchanges. He concluded that citizens came together in a variety of settings to debate concerns central to the entire society. He theorized, for example, that individuals could gather in coffeehouses or salons to discuss non-democratic government action and thus create a consensus

of opinion which checked these actions. An individual's economic status, ethnicity, and societal position within these "public" spaces were immaterial. Habermas argued that democratic societies depended upon this type of public exchange to create a society that valued non-elite perspectives and a culture that reflected the values of a majority. Within his analysis, however, Habermas used a variety of cultural exchanges that freely crossed temporal and national boundaries. As a result, despite the groundbreaking aspects of his theory, many scholars argued that Habermas's public sphere never existed in the egalitarian manner he suggested.<sup>13</sup> Habermas himself acknowledged that this free and open exchange of ideas represented a mere moment in the development of the modern political state and quickly ended as profit considerations began to drive media. In Habermas's view, the publisher's role in the creation of media began to alter the role of public discourse because "a new function was inserted between the gathering and publication of news: the editorial function." As a result, "the newspaper's publisher . . . changed from being a merchant of news to being a dealer in public opinion."<sup>14</sup> Habermas believed that the selling of information altered the ability of non-elite participants to express ideas and also created an incentive for pandering. On this point, however, Habermas's theory did not account for the vast expansion of publishing opportunities which emerged in early twentieth-century America, including the ability of non-elites, like Haldeman-Julius and Franklin, to found their own publishing ventures.

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<sup>13</sup> Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere: A Contribution to the Critique of Actually Existing Democracy," *Social Text* no. 25/26 (1990): 56-80. Fraser argues that "Habermas stops short of developing a new, post-bourgeois model of the public sphere. Moreover, he never explicitly problematizes some dubious assumptions that underlie the bourgeois model. As a result, we are left at the end of *Structural Transformation* without a conception of the public sphere that is sufficiently distinct from the bourgeois conception to serve the needs of critical theory today." Fraser's article provides important updates to Habermas's theories and establishes a framework for imaging the "public sphere" as a foundation for inclusion and possibility. It should be noted that Habermas does not explicitly argue that the public sphere MUST be masculine, nor should the term be confused with the idea of a public (male) versus private (female) dichotomy.

<sup>14</sup> Jurgen Habermas, *The Social Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991). 182.

Habermas broadened his consideration of civil society and returned to the “public sphere” in *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy*, published in 1996. Responding to critics who had assailed his earlier treatment of the “public sphere” as too limited and too idealistic, Habermas argued that exchanges in the “public sphere” represented one mechanism, among many, that shaped legal precedent within democracies.<sup>15</sup> He asserted that “the public sphere is a warning system with sensors that, though unspecialized, are sensitive throughout society. From the perspective of democratic theory, the public sphere must, in addition, amplify the pressure of problems.”<sup>16</sup> In other words, the public sphere gave citizens an outlet to express their discontent and to advocate for societal change. Through the pages of newspapers, magazines, and pamphlets, and a myriad of informal verbal exchanges, members of democratic societies used the public sphere to draw attention to problems within society and amplify the discontent of their fellow citizens.<sup>17</sup> Habermas, however, did not claim that an active public sphere guaranteed positive political or social change. He maintained that “the capacity of the public sphere to solve problems *on its own* is limited. But this capacity must be utilized to oversee the further treatment of problems that takes place inside the political system.” Thus, while the direct impact of Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White cannot be directly quantified, each viewed his work as fulfilling the societal role of increasing public awareness and moving American culture toward a more enlightened dialogue.

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<sup>15</sup> John L. Brooke, “Reason and Passion in the Public Sphere: Habermas and the Cultural Historians,” *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* (Summer 1998): 52. Brooke argues that “key dimensions of Habermas’ analysis remain controversial.” Specifically, he argues that “philosophers are not in agreement about Habermas’ emphasis on rationality in discourse and its relationship to his wider defense of modernity, or about his challenge to Michel Foucault’s understanding of cultural power. Feminist philosophers and historians have long been among Habermas’s most vocal critics, arguing that his conception of the public sphere is implicitly masculine and alienating to women. Critics also complain that not just men dominated the public sphere, but white men of property – the eighteenth-century bourgeoisie.”

<sup>16</sup> Jurgen Habermas, *Between Facts and Norms: Contributions to a Discourse Theory of Law and Democracy* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1998), 359.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid. Habermas states that public sphere exchanges should “not only thematize them [problems], furnish them with possible solutions, and dramatize them in such a way that they are taken up and dealt with by parliamentary complexes. Besides the ‘signal’ function, there must be an effective problematization.”

The translation of Habermas into English resulted in an immediate reaction from historians focused on both European and American cultural products. John L. Brooke observed in a 1998 overview of Habermas's influence on American historians that the concepts he developed finally allowed cultural historians to grapple with political participation and societal membership. Brooke argued that "The Habermasian public sphere thus served the critical function of helping historians to organize, discuss, and assess the dimension of 'culture' with an eye toward the power relations in society usually bundled together simply as 'politics.'"<sup>18</sup> Further, Habermas's work entered American history discourse at a moment when historians were reevaluating the value of social history and the potential pitfalls ushered in by this approach. Thomas Bender lamented that social history created a "discipline fragmented into a large number of separate but highly cultivated boxes."<sup>19</sup> As the field increasingly illuminated the unique experience of subgroups within American society, the study of American history had become so specialized, according to Bender, that "we gained little in our understanding of the relations of place, race, ethnicity, gender, and class in the formation or, for that matter, in the development of individual Americans."<sup>20</sup> While Bender did not indict social history completely - he actually championed the increasing weight it brought to bear upon diverse subjects - he advocated a new synthesis, which put disparate groups in connection with each other and created a more complete understanding of history. He urged "a reconceptualization of our history that stresses the interplay of various groups, usually characterized as homogeneous, whether defined socially (for

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<sup>18</sup> Brooke, 48.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Bender. "Wholes and Parts: The Need for Synthesis in American History," *Journal of American History* 73 (June 1986): 128.

<sup>20</sup> Bender, "Wholes and Parts", 129.

example, ethnic groups) or as private worlds (for example, the family), and the larger, heterogeneous, and contested political cultural realm of the nation.”<sup>21</sup>

While the process through which cultural expression has influenced societal formation undergirds the approach of many historians, the inclusion of Habermas within the work of American historians is limited. On one hand this might be attributed to many historians’ general apathy towards theory; few Americanists are compelled to orient their studies within theoretical lenses. On the other hand, it might be that neither of Habermas’s works focused on America or suggested that a “public sphere” survived the advent of corporatization or community fragmentation. Brooke points to several historians whose work explored the intersection between official behavior and public activity and reflected Habermas’s view of the public sphere.<sup>22</sup> Brooke does not, however, assert that the engagement with Habermas’s theory extends deeply within American historical inquiry. Several of the works he examined gave Habermas a mere passing mention and others dismissed him completely.<sup>23</sup> Ultimately, Habermas’s theory retains relevance because the notion of a public sphere discourse became embedded in the minds of democratic citizens and the concept endured as an ideal within free societies. For the purposes of this study, Habermas’s theory provides a crucial foundation for this project due each publisher’s faith in the power of public discourse. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, Chester A. Franklin, and William Lindsay White dealt with concerns universal within America; yet, their positions on

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<sup>21</sup> Bender, “Wholes and Parts”, 132.

<sup>22</sup> Brooke, 47. Brooke’s article focused specifically on David S. Shields, *Civil Tongues and Polite Letters in British America* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). David Waldstreicher, *In the Midst of Perpetual Fetes* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1997). Simon P. Newman, *Parades and Politics of the Streets: Festive Culture in the Early Republic* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1997). Mary P. Ryan, *Civic Wars: Democracy and Public Life in the American City during the Nineteenth Century* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1997). William L. Miller, *Arguing about Slavery: The Great Battle in the United States Congress* (New York: Knopf, 1996). All of the works dissected by Brooke deal primarily with the eighteenth or nineteenth centuries. He does, however, also point to Elizabeth Cohen’s *Making a New Deal: Industrial Workers in Chicago, 1919-1939* as another work that dealt with public sphere behavior and cultural development.

<sup>23</sup> Brooke, 54. He asserts that “Newman is the most restrained regarding Habermas; he simply redefines the public sphere as ‘contested terrain’ and moves on.”

these issues differed dramatically and emphasized unique cultural values. They balanced local issues and interests alongside a desire for a national audience. They operated local companies rather than corporate monoliths but sought expanded publication opportunities. They viewed their writing as an extension of their duty as Americans to advocate for a stronger nation and believed it created a conduit between themselves and the American public.

The “public sphere” provides historians a concept that can unite diverse perspectives and help historians form a more complete understanding of societal complexity and examine how all groups experienced history. Bender’s framing of American history challenges historians to explore the progression of social values and necessitates a comprehensive and elastic view of past cultural paradigms. Specifically, Bender argued in *Community and Social Change in America* that types of associations, particularly notions of community, constantly evolve. Within different historical periods social expectations changed and various conditions were considered ideal and “community” has referred to different locations, structures, and interactions. Thus, an evaluation of early twentieth-century communities based upon contemporary expectations distorts both the past and the present. He asserted that “if community is defined as a colonial New England town – and it frequently is defined that way – then the prospect of community today is indeed dim.” Even though sounding alarm bells about the death of American communal structures might drive interest and attract readers, Bender cautioned that “the historian should also note that to define community in such static terms is to ignore the process of history.”<sup>24</sup>

A separation of the past and present formulations of community allows the establishment of community as a useful lens of analysis. Bender based his study on the assumption that “a community involves a limited number of people in a somewhat restricted social space or network

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<sup>24</sup> Thomas Bender, *Community and Social Change in America* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 1978), 4. Pages 46 – 58 contain Bender’s analysis of community decline historiography.

held together by shared understandings and a sense of obligation.” Beyond the communal sense of responsibility, he argued that “relationships are close, often intimate and usually face to face. Individuals are bound together by affective or emotional ties rather than by a perception of individual self-interest.” Within this grouping “there is a ‘we-ness’ in a community; one is a member. Sense of self and of community may be difficult to distinguish.”<sup>25</sup> Bender’s definition of community serves as an effective starting point for this study because it describes the isolated “island communities” that dissolved during the early twentieth-century and establishes that fulfillment and social bonds do not depend on geographic borders or specific ideological beliefs. Community can form around any unifying characteristic and any set of experiences shared by individuals, and within diverse groupings multiple “communities” can coexist. In fact, Bender asserted

Although it is common to speak of Americans as national citizens in the twentieth century, because they are involved with social organizations of national scale and with status referents in a national system of stratification, it is clear that distinctive patterns of culture, whether based upon class, ethnicity, religion, local tradition, or family heritage, affect the way in which particular individuals or groups relate and have related to national institutions.<sup>26</sup>

As a result, twentieth-century communal relationships depended on the way individuals viewed themselves, how they related to one another, and how ideological associations influenced their relationship with upon society as a whole.<sup>27</sup> Moreover, this communal flexibility provided an opportunity for media purveyors to essentially *create* community via carefully marketed and written products. The men considered in this study used their media platforms to unite

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., 7-8. In addition to setting a useful definition of community, Bender successfully argues against many historical works that have overlapped historical expectation with contemporary circumstance.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 117.

<sup>27</sup> Dumenil, 42. Throughout much of the work, Dumenil argues that the 1920s saw America increasingly embrace nationalism over localism. Particularly, she argues here that “for those people whose economic or professional identity gave them a national rather than a local focus, community became less associated with place and more socially constructed. The result was a multiplicity of communities defined by shared interests based on economic goals, professional status, cultural or religious perspectives, gender, ethnicity, or race.”



geographically separate individuals through shared ideology and their unique visions for America.

The formation of community through ideas and shared intellectual belief also formed the basis for Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Anderson argued that because of large populations and vast geographical territories, modern nations have depended upon ideas and values to create unity within their citizenry. The nation, in Anderson's view, had been "imagined as a *community*, because, regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail . . . the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship."<sup>28</sup> As a result, publishing and media served integral roles within the creation of national identity and culture. This study uses Bender and Anderson's work as a foundation for understanding how published material brought together like-minded individuals, despite geographical or social separation. Each publisher considered in this study desired to expand his audience and influence as many Americans as possible. Local populations, however, did not always provide sympathetic audiences, agree with them politically, or constitute a wide enough public. As a result, Haldeman-Julius and Franklin pursued strategies designed to widen the reach of their publications and, in effect, *created* a community of like-minded Americans who would consume their ideas. William Lindsay White joined an already established ideological community when he became a roving reporter for *Reader's Digest*.

Beyond the theoretical frame produced by Habermas, Bender, and Anderson, the role of news in modern society has been investigated by scholars concerned with the impact of information upon the modern world. Michael Schudson's *The Sociology of News*, published in

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<sup>28</sup> Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (Brooklyn, NY: Verso, 1983). 7.

2003, explores the role of news within society and the ways in which newsmakers shape content. Schudson argues that within modern America, news represents a rundown of important stories, events, and issues. As he asserts:

A news story is an announcement of a special kind. It is not like an advertisement, the self-interested purpose of which one can presume. It is not like a public relations event, which is suspect on its face. It is a declaration by a familiar commercial or state agency, staffed by news professionals, that an event is noteworthy. It announces to audiences that a topic deserves public attention.<sup>29</sup>

Despite the seemingly civic-minded content found within news stories, Schudson also acknowledges that contemporary news has been shaped and created by individuals, editors, and publishing proprietors with the intention of attracting readership. Not limited to the questions of who, what, when, where, and why, modern news reflects the perspective and viewpoint of multiple individuals by the time of publication. For Schudson, unlike Habermas, this profit motive did not destroy the positive public influence of journalists and he argues that news served both as a public service and profit-generating enterprise.<sup>30</sup> Within this study, Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White will be considered as journalists who selected, and amplified, stories based on their individual political perspectives. Their use of publishing platforms to *create* news by drawing attention to subjects of personal interest will demonstrate their belief in the increasing power of public sphere discourse to influence readers and shape political and social debate.

Within his analysis of news, Schudson draws a clear line of demarcation between the theoretical work of Habermas and Anderson. He argues that

Where Anderson examines social membership, Habermas looks to criticism of the state and formation of liberal institutions. Anderson's 'imagined communities' have nothing to

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<sup>29</sup> Michael Schudson, *The Sociology of News* (New York, NY: Norton, 2003). 30.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, 2-6.

do with liberalism but instead concern national consciousness; the Habermasian ‘public sphere’ has everything to do with liberalism, both its achievements and limitations.<sup>31</sup>

While Schudson accurately summarizes the theories of both Habermas and Anderson, in my view he does not adequately account for the power of subgroups, or in Anderson’s words “imagined communities,” to use the public sphere as an avenue to influence liberalism. Newspapers, magazines, and other forms of media not only bore the imprint of their publishers, they also provided publishers a platform to influence discourse.<sup>32</sup> In this study, I will use Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White as examples of publishers who targeted their writings to particular audiences and who believed that their writing could inspire action, spur their readers to engage with others, and ultimately influence national discourse. Thus, in addition to seeking profit, they sought to use the audiences they created (‘imagined communities’) to influence the agenda of a national public sphere.<sup>33</sup>

In addition to theoretical examinations of media, broad historical works have excavated the unique circumstances that influenced American intellectual production via newspapers and publishing. Paul Starr’s *The Creation of the Media* considers media ranging from newspapers to motion pictures and argues that America has consistently embraced an open exchange of ideas via the media. Starr argues that “because of the interest in strengthening republication institutions, early American policy included strong positive commitments to information and

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<sup>31</sup> Schudson, 68-69. The cited quotation is the clearest contrast he draws between the theories of both men. On pages 66-67 he provides an overview of Habermas – specifically the origins of the ‘public sphere.’ Additionally, on pages 67-68 he summarizes Anderson’s work as well.

<sup>32</sup> Schudson, 212. He almost acknowledges this point when he states that “Its [global journalism] coverage of small personal dramas of everyday life, triumphs or tragedies in science and education, and conflict or transcendence in religion or culture may create a community as much as its coverage of politics builds a public agenda. In both ways, news becomes part of the daily rethinking and restructuring of a common social world.”

<sup>33</sup> Habermas, 307. He theorizes that “the currents of public communication channeled by mass media and flow through different publics that develop informally inside associations.”

communication.”<sup>34</sup> These early attitudes shaped American media precedent and percolated throughout American development. By the 1930s, Starr asserts, “Their [the media] reach through space and time was far greater than ever before. In a sense, they had fulfilled the democratic hope of universal access so well that they were developing into a nearly ubiquitous aspect of daily experience.”<sup>35</sup> Starr’s exploration of legal precedent and policy attitudes leads him to assert that America developed a media climate permissive to variation and dependent upon the free exchange of ideas. His work provides an expansive understanding of the relationship between independent media outlets, corporate centralized control, and governmental regulation.

Leonard Ray Teel’s *The Public Press, 1900-1945*, examines the professionalization of the American newspaper industry and the influence this process had on the relationship between the press and public opinion. Teel argued that a slow move away from sensationalized stories, along with the endorsement of standards and ethics, marked the emergence of an empowered press: A profession “blessed with money and editorial independence” and a unique “opportunity to articulate, discover, and practice something spirited and soulful, a commitment to a vision of public service.”<sup>36</sup> Teel distinguishes between a local press, which depends upon close relationships with advertisers, and national outlets that could offend local sensibilities and continue to prosper. The differentiation between local and national agendas represents an aspect of the collective American media. Teel’s work utilizes a wide range of editorial examples and concentrates on the narrative of media development rather than the evolution of specific publications. As a result, his work proves useful in establishing a broad understanding of the American media environment, but his omission of any detailed examination of particular authors

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<sup>34</sup> Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (New York, NY: Basic Books, 2004). 16.

<sup>35</sup> *Ibid.*, 386.

<sup>36</sup> Leonard Ray Teel, *The Public Press, 1900-1945* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006). Preface.

or publishers provides a pathway for future scholars. This study argues that the work of Haldeman-Julius, and White with *Reader's Digest*, represented a more open type of publishing because of their reliance on subscribers rather than advertisers. Franklin's work at the *Kansas City Call* and White's writing in the *Emporia Gazette*, however, dealt much more closely with a local audience.

In addition to the theoretical or the historiographical analysis of American media, other works demonstrate the close relationship between media, culture, and American behavior. Beginning in the early twentieth century, journalists established a precedent for using the media to influence society.<sup>37</sup> The proliferation of publications meant that new perspectives could be heard, ideas which would have previously been dismissed could gain traction, and calls for corporate or government reform could be spread far and wide. Muckraker journalists spoke to "a mood of deep social concern and disaffection" and used the public sphere to draw attention to problems and marshal social pressure in the same way Habermas had theorized in *Facts and Norms*.<sup>38</sup> Their stories resulted in the removal of corrupt government officials, the establishment of government oversight of industries like meat packaging and sanitation, and increased scrutiny on labor regulations.<sup>39</sup>

In addition to spotlighting issues concerning governmental structure and public safety, an expansion in the number of publications resulted in writing for every taste. Publications sprang up like wildflowers after a spring rain and catered to every audience imaginable. Al Silverman argues that "if the middle of the 1920s had a distinctiveness, besides prosperity, it was this: entrepreneurs of the word had captured America." Specifically, Silverman points out that during

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<sup>37</sup> Roger Streitmatter, *Mightier than the Sword: How the News Media Have Shaped American History* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997). 86.

<sup>38</sup> Habermas, 307. Habermas believes that the public sphere served as a mechanism for individuals and groups to popularize problems and gain support for solutions.

<sup>39</sup> Streitmatter, 85-102.

this period “DeWitt and Lila Acheson Wallace founded the *Reader’s Digest* in 1922; Henry Luce and Briton Hadden started *Time* in 1923; Henry Seidel Canby became founding editor of *The Saturday Review of Literature* in 1924; Harold Ross created *The New Yorker* in 1925. And, in 1926, Harry Scherman invented the book club.”<sup>40</sup>

The Book-of-the-Month Club attempted to replicate the tastes of an average American through a board comprised of representative authors. Silverman maintained that the use of well-known authors helped give the club credibility and the initial board members represented diverse strands of American society. Specifically, “White [William Allen] . . . represented the values of middle America. [and] The New York newspaper columnist Heywood Broun spoke for urban America.”<sup>41</sup> The impetus for the book club was to fill a need for middle-class, educated readers. Similarly, Haldeman-Julius’s Little Blue Books were intended to expand access to literature for a wide swath of the working class. Rather than rely on a board of representative figures, however, the editorial perspective of Haldeman-Julius Publications reflected the tastes of an individual. As a result, the milquetoast nature of the Book-of-the-Month Club stood a far cry from the controversial aspects of Haldeman-Julius’s publishing catalog. Despite the fact that it was a weekly paper, the foundation of the *Kansas City Call* during this time echoed the efforts of community creation via publishing. Franklin responded to the influx of African Americans in Kansas City and used his paper as a way to integrate the new arrivals into the community. Finally, William Lindsay White’s involvement with *Reader’s Digest* placed him within this push to spread culture, albeit as someone who joined an established periodical rather than starting one of his own.

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<sup>40</sup> Al Silverman, ed., *The Books of the Month: Sixty Years of Book in American Life* (Boston, MA: Little Brown, 1986). xiii. Not only does Silverman connect the book club with other ventures started around the same time, he points out the penchant Canby had for advertising.

<sup>41</sup> Silverman, xvii. He also notes that “the witty and sophisticated novelist Christopher Morley looked for ‘what literature is most intended to be, entertainment, surprise and delight.’”

The proliferation of outlets during the same shortspan indicates that American culture overall underwent a change in consumption. During this time, periodical publications also began presenting idealized social qualities for their readers to emulate. Tom Pendergast's *Creating the Modern Man* explores how media outlets turned the qualities society valued in men into consumable commodities. Pendergast argued that in the first half of the twentieth century American men were beset by writers, publishers, and a host of other popular media outlets that bombarded the public with examples of how men should, and could, act. In his view, periodical publications such as *McClure's*, *Collier's* and *Esquire*, among others, used idealized versions of masculinity and ideal male behavior to advocate a consumer lifestyle compatible with America's commercial culture. In other words, publishers became aware of their social power to influence individuals and used men's fear of failing to appear manly to sell a plethora of products. Despite the focus on masculinity found within Pendergast's text, the underlying assertion about periodical editors remains valid and can easily be extrapolated to include other values, behaviors, and political beliefs. Pendergast's work demonstrates how the politics and agendas of publishers influenced media content and how publishers used media outlets to create models for Americans to copy and implement in their daily lives.

Demographic changes, the spread of information, and community formation represent equally important strands of a full understanding of twentieth-century America. Recent historiography has seen a surge of local studies focused upon the various interest groups and conflicts within a particular region or urban area. Ann Douglas's *Terrible Honesty: Mongrel Manhattan in the 1920s* centers upon the intermingling of cultural luminaries in New York City. Douglas uses intellectual movements and literary examples as evidence of a unique American culture forged in the fires of warfare and modernity. According to her analysis, New York City

possessed a vitality and diversity not found elsewhere. Though Douglas's work marshals an impressive collection of intellectuals and examines an expansive breadth of sources, her narrow geographical focus limits the applicability of her analysis. Beyond New York, and more centrally focused on race relations, Thomas Sugrue's *The Origins of the Urban Crisis*, Robert Self's *American Babylon*, and Kimberly Phillip's *Alabama North* all examine the formation of African-American communities and the interaction between white and black residents within a region or particular city. Each of these works demonstrates how urban African-American residents responded to social and political tension and attempted to carve out space within established white communities and within urban discourse.

Of more interest to historians concerned with the American Midwest, studies such as Beth Bailey's *Sex in the Heartland*, Gretchen Eick's *Dissent in Wichita*, and Charles Coulter's '*Take Up the Black Man's Burden*' focus on social conflicts within Kansas communities. Bailey uses the city of Lawrence as her primary example of a redefinition of sexuality following World War II. Her analysis demonstrates not only that societal changes were more mainstream than historians had realized, but also that middle America grappled with modernity in the same way as large urban areas. Eick's analysis of the Civil Rights movement places the Kansas town of Wichita front and center, as both battleground and home of NAACP leader Chester Lewis. By connecting the struggle in Wichita to the larger Civil Rights movement, Eick urges historians to consider the national scope of the movement. Charles E. Coulter's '*Take up the Black Man's Burden*,' explores the formation of an African-American community within Kansas City through community organizations, leisure activities, and struggles towards racial equality. Coulter's work also focuses upon community luminaries who spearheaded efforts toward improved working conditions and civic pride. The works of Bailey, Eick, and Coulter provide positive sources for



any scholar wishing to examine twentieth-century Kansas. That each focuses on the development of, and controversies in, a single Kansas community, however, underscores the need for a study that more broadly examines the reactions of Kansans to the societal changes in twentieth-century America. Through the writing of Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White, this study analyzes how each publisher's local community influenced his vision for American society and how the available local audience led each publisher to pursue a divergent strategy for nation-wide distribution.

Through consideration of the competing notions of ideal Americanism put forward by Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, Chester Franklin, and William Lindsay White, this study argues that a variety of factors influenced information purveyors during this period. Each publisher's career overlapped with the other's in terms of geography, content, and time period. Yet, they each employed dramatically different strategies to access the public sphere, cultivate audience loyalty, and balance local issues alongside a desire for national prominence. Despite the over idealized version of the public sphere imagined by Habermas, the concept proves useful because publishers became aware of the political potency of their periodicals during the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century. Moreover, an understanding of the exchange of information in twentieth-century America, and the central role of public discourse in creating culture, depends as much on understanding what happened as on what publishers intended. Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White shared a belief that their writing could be used as a tool to influence a wide segment of the population as well as public debate and policy. Comparative consideration of their publishing efforts, therefore, will not only increase knowledge of regional history, but also illuminate how culture was formed and disseminated in twentieth-century America.

The first chapter analyzes the emergence and success of immigrant publisher Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. Always a newspaperman, Haldeman-Julius found success at the *Philadelphia Daily*, *Milwaukee Leader*, *Chicago Daily World*, *Los Angeles Citizen*, and the *New York Call* before accepting a position at J.A. Wayland's socialist magazine, *Appeal to Reason*. Haldeman-Julius migrated from Philadelphia to Kansas City in 1915 and moved soon after, along with the *Appeal to Reason*, to Girard, Kansas. Following his marriage to Marcet Haldeman, the couple opened Haldeman-Julius Publishing, a venture that vastly exceeded the scope of *Appeal to Reason* and became their primary source of income.

Within his diverse publications, Haldeman-Julius identified particularly vexing problems within America – limited access to information and knowledge, racial segregation, financial inequality, and rigid prohibitions against open dialogues concerning sexuality – which he believed undermined the potential strength of America as a nation. He expressed radical socialist belief, cantankerous societal criticism, and virulently anti-establishment and anti-religious perspectives. Through both content and authorship, his publications revealed a strong sympathy toward African Americans, radical left-leaning politics, and expanded sexual freedom. Although Haldeman-Julius occasionally authored books, the company mostly published other authors' work in the Little Blue Book series. For example, W.E.B. Dubois authored Blue Books #1505 *Africa, Its Geography, People, and Products* and #1552 *Africa-Its Place in Modern History* in 1930. Other notable authors included Clarence Darrow, Jane Addams, and H.G. Wells. This chapter analyzes Haldeman-Julius's use of mass marketing to create an audience for his writing. Rural southeast Kansas, despite its substantial number of left-leaning immigrant miners, did not contain a sizeable sympathetic population or offer a large pool of consumers for Haldeman-Julius's writing. In a broader sense, neither did the state of Kansas. In the early 1900s,

Kansas contained no sizeable urban centers on par with New York or Chicago, urban areas well known for fostering successful socialist publications. Thus, Haldeman-Julius's success as an entrepreneur depended upon the identification, and creation, of a market for his writings outside the region. Under the leadership of Haldeman-Julius, the company expanded its catalog to over 3,000 titles and become a leading publisher of affordable reading material. In addition to Little Blue Books, Haldeman-Julius published multiple weekly and monthly periodicals highlighting similar concerns.

Chapter two explores the emergence of the *Kansas City Call* as the leading African American newspaper west of the Mississippi River. Established in 1919, the weekly paper exceeded 40,000 subscriptions by 1948 and provides an excellent window into the perspective, and concerns, of Kansas City's African American community. Behind its pages stood Chester A. Franklin, its founder and editorial voice, who steadfastly championed egalitarian policies and racial uplift. Through *The Kansas City Call*, Franklin focused on uniting a Kansas City African-American community experiencing rapid growth and supported various civic efforts to promote integration. He embraced a strategy of adaptation to combat intolerance and firmly believed that the Kansas City black community could achieve equality via self-improvement. Franklin did not limit his advocacy to Kansas City or the pages of his newspaper. He expanded his operation to the regional hubs of St. Louis and Tulsa, marketed the *Kansas City Call* as the "Southwest's Leading Weekly," and attempted to unify news coverage of African American communities throughout the region. In his private life he championed Republican political candidates on all elected levels, maintained an active presence in the Urban League, and became a frequent correspondent with Missouri native Harry Truman. Franklin endorsed the "public sphere" as a political platform and used his paper to influence local audiences and saw regional expansion as

a way to unite disparate populations of African-Americans. Finally, the chapter concludes with the juxtaposition of Kansas City's centennial celebration in 1950 and the retirement of Chester Franklin. While the *Kansas City Star* sought to place the celebration front and center, the *Kansas City Call* spent far more time focused on national issues and racial equality. In addition, through an examination of the role African Americans played in the Centennial proceedings, the coverage of the event in *The Call*, it becomes clear that though the role of African Americans had expanded by 1950, inequalities persisted.

Chapter three focuses on the writing career of author and publisher William Lindsay White. Literally born into the fields of journalism and social commentary as the son of Kansas icon William Allen White in 1900, White represents the generation following Haldeman-Julius and Franklin. He became an influential journalist in his own right on the eve of World War II but did so by joining established publications rather than by establishing his own platform. He burst onto the national scene in the 1940s as an early proponent of American involvement in World War II and throughout his career continued for strengthening traditional American values. In 1941 he joined *Reader's Digest* as a roving reporter and assumed the role of *Emporia Gazette* editor following his father's death in 1944. Free to pursue stories either domestically or abroad, White blended conservatism with an inclusive view of American society. White's work covered a vast range of topics: economic policy, U.S. servicemen during World War II and Korea, postwar politics, and racial relations. Through *Reader's Digest*, White tapped into an established national audience and a conservative audience sympathetic to his version of ideal Americanism that rested upon hard work, self-reliance, and anti-communism. White viewed these qualities as a necessary counter to the changes occurring within mid-twentieth century America. This project argues that White's writing functioned on multiple levels. In addition to the *Digest's* nation-wide

audience, White captured the local community of Emporia through his inheritance of the *Gazette*. Thus, White simultaneously spoke to national and local audiences in a way few other writers could.

Returning to Haldeman-Julius, Chapter four delves deeper into controversial aspects of his political and social views. Specifically, this chapter uses his involvement with the socialist *Appeal to Reason*, his contentious relationship with the local draft board during World War I, and charges of tax evasion in the 1950s, to cast Haldeman-Julius as an anti-establishment figure. This continual courting of controversy came to fruition in a 1961 obscenity case. Following the death of Haldeman-Julius in 1951, the company continued publishing his well-established catalog under the direction of his son, Henry Haldeman. As American jurisprudence caught up to the formation of a national public sphere, however, legal standards for obscenity shifted. Put on trial in 1961, for works his father had originally published in the 1940s, Henry Haldeman's conviction, and successful appeal, bankrupted the company. The testimony and argumentation within the trial transcript reveals how the definition of radicalism and the legal standard for obscenity had to be changed in reaction to the emergence of a national public sphere.

Whereas Chapter three focused exclusively on White's emergence as a national journalist and his prescriptions for American society, Chapter five examines how his writing dealt with African Americans, non-European foreigners, and the rise of the Third World. Given the predominant attitudes within mid-twentieth century America, and conservative positions White advocated, one might expect White to express contempt and antagonism toward these groups; yet, he routinely used his public writings to advocate the opposite. Moreover, White's recipe for continuing American prosperity and strength demanded that the country embrace foreigners and spread American values abroad. Thus, he stressed the importance of openness, free economic

exchange, the freedom of the press, education, and the ability of foreigners to adapt and thrive under American ideals.

Finally, an epilogue explores the lasting legacies of each author on both a local and national level. Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White all sought to influence public opinion and shape America around their ideals. The outlets they influenced most directly, however, have only had middling success since their passing. Due to fallout from the obscenity conviction of Henry Haldeman, which is examined in chapter four, Haldeman-Julius Publishing ceased publication a little more than a decade after the death of its founder. The respective publishing efforts of Franklin and White continued after their deaths but circulation has diminished considerably.<sup>42</sup> Through a comparative recap, this chapter argues that the legacy of Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White suggest strategies for creating unified communities in the fragmented media marketplace facing contemporary Americans. Despite Haldeman-Julius Publication's bankruptcy, the effort to unite disparate individuals through information has been realized online. The continued publication of the *Kansas City Call* and *Emporia Gazette* suggests that despite the diminished size of local communities, geography remains a powerful unifying factor.

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<sup>42</sup> Both *The Kansas City Call* and the *Emporia Gazette* continue publishing. Subscribers for the *Call's* weekly publication have dropped considerably since the 1960s, and while the *Gazette* is run by a fourth generation White, its influence has also waned.

## **Chapter 1: Creating Community: Emanuel Haldeman-Julius's Efforts to Manufacture an Audience and Influence America.**

In a May 17, 1930, editorial publicizing the case of Tom Mooney, a labor organizer who had been jailed in California, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius proclaimed that “what America needs is a fighting organization with a strong publicity connection and aim, to attack injustice and hypocrisy and threats to our liberties wherever and whenever these evils hurl at us the challenge of action.” He backed up this call for political activism and increased intellectual awareness by vowing to use “the great modern weapon – the printing press . . . to discharge among the ranks of public opinion the ammunition of millions of powerful, printed words.”<sup>1</sup>

That the printed word could influence public opinion animated much of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius's career. His work can be categorized: collaborative novels written with his wife, Marcet Haldeman-Julius; articles written for self-published periodicals such as *Appeal to Reason*, *American Freeman*, and the *Critic and Guide*; and writers he published within his book series. Each category exposes important facets of his intellectual perspective, political beliefs, and vision for America. Most analyses of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius focus either exclusively on his pioneering use of mass marketing or his controversial ties to American socialism. This chapter argues that a full understanding of Haldeman-Julius's career cannot be found within such limited scope and requires examining how his mass marketing techniques, especially direct-mail catalogs, capitalized on a burgeoning American public sphere. Haldeman-Julius used his publishing company as a mechanism to manufacture the widest possible audience and as a method of advocating political and social change. In pursuit of both profit and positive impact, Haldeman-Julius produced writing he believed he could influence American society; whenever possible, this chapter allows his prose to speak for itself.

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<sup>1</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, *American Freeman*, May 10, 1930.

Haldeman-Julius entered the publishing industry during a period of great change in America. The nation was in the midst of a radical shift in population and commercial organization. Large numbers of Americans had moved north and west in search of occupational advancement; as land became scarce in the previously untamed West, they increasingly pursued prosperity in urban areas. This shift resulted in an American populace untethered from restrictive social traditions and a diminishment of the bonds of community that had connected people in rural communities.<sup>2</sup> Not only were Americans bombarded with technological marvels that allowed them to easily traverse great distances, they could increasingly communicate with people throughout the nation. This increasing closeness encouraged conformity, and merchants of all types embraced mass marketing in order to encourage material consumption on an unprecedented scale. In addition, this shift from farm to town resulted in previously isolated Americans coming into close contact with new cultural ideas, social mores, and lifestyles.

As the work of Bender and Anderson has shown, conceptions of community in the early twentieth century not only valued geography and face-to-face interactions but also ideological commonality. Thus, the increasing size and diversity of America encouraged media purveyors to bypass geographic limitations and disseminate their publications to disparate national audiences. Haldeman-Julius believed that his publications could unify readers through political ideas, the descriptions of shared experiences, and a mutual need for education. Thus, the conception of an expanded public sphere, combined with the shift toward new forms of community, provides the basis for a multi-layered understanding of the materials Haldeman-Julius published and his personal vision for America. Haldeman-Julius sought to meet the intellectual needs of his audience in much the same way that a host of mail-order catalogs sought to fill the material needs of American consumers. He understood the power of the public sphere to create

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<sup>2</sup> Robert H. Wiebe, *The Search for Order 1877-1920* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1967).



ideological communities within America and unite diverse groups of people. He used his published materials to spread the common ideology of rationalism and free thinking, encouraged societal liberalization, and provided tools for self-improvement. Through Haldeman-Julius's catalog, readers gained intellectual knowledge and a fuller understanding of the people and world around them.

Haldeman-Julius established a voluminous catalog that could accommodate any taste. This broad focus helped him establish one of the most successful American publishing ventures in the early twentieth century. He asserted in *The First Hundred Million* that when he started the book business he “thought that it might be possible to put books within the reach of everyone, rich or poor, though mostly poor and grading up to those not so poor but by no means wealthy – books that they would want, and which they could choose for the sake of books alone.”<sup>3</sup> This study argues that Emanuel Haldeman-Julius distributed materials that addressed all aspects of modern life, allowed for published interactions between readers and authors, and assured anonymity for readers purchasing texts on self-improvement and sexuality. His widespread distribution of materials was partially based on business strategy and partially on a desire to influence America. Not only did he hope to circumvent the largely conservative population of southeast Kansas, he also sought to construct a community of readers who valued egalitarianism and self-improvement. Thus, he addressed problems central to the lives of working class Americans, provided political arguments specifically tailored to their economic and social isolation, and emphasized pathways of intellectual improvement.

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<sup>3</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, *The First Hundred Million* (New York: Simon and Shuster, 1928), 1.

## The Local Community

Haldeman-Julius sought access to an expanding national public sphere and the largest audience possible. Within Kansas, however, his Girard headquarters was and is isolated. The town is located approximately 15 miles south of Pittsburg, Kansas, 124 miles south of Kansas City, 168 miles east of Wichita, and 172 miles from Emporia.<sup>4</sup> Additionally, Girard is located about 49 miles west of Joplin, Missouri, the town other than Pittsburg most frequently mentioned as a destination for Haldeman-Julius and his family.

The local population did not constitute a vast audience. In 1920, the town of Girard, county seat of Crawford County, boasted a population of 3,161, while nearby Pittsburg had 18,052 residents. The larger area of Crawford County held a total population of 61,800. Further, growth in the region did not center in Girard. The town had grown by only 688 residents since 1900, while Pittsburg had added 7,940 and Crawford County had attracted almost 23,000 additional residents.<sup>5</sup> Industrialization, specifically coal mining, represented the primary engine of growth within the area and also accounted for the sizeable population of immigrants within the region.<sup>6</sup> The 1920 census noted that Crawford County's population also was approximately 14.7% foreign-born white.<sup>7</sup> Subsequent decades witnessed an overall decline in the region's population. By the 1950 census, Pittsburg had remained relatively steady at 19,341, Girard had shrunk to 2,426, and Crawford County only housed 40,231 total residents. Moreover, most of

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<sup>4</sup> Distance information was obtained using [www.mapquest.com](http://www.mapquest.com). I have provided raw mileage statistics instead of travel time due to the difficulty determining what roads would have been available in 1920 and the approximate speed of automobile travel. In several letters Marcet Haldeman-Julius mentions car rides to Kansas City.

<sup>5</sup> "Statistics of Population, Occupations, and Agriculture," State of Kansas Census Compendium, K 312 un. 3 (1950) Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

<sup>6</sup> John G. Clark, "A Study in Regional Industrialization: Southeastern Kansas, 1890-1930," in *History of Kansas: Selected Reading*, ed. George L. Anderson and Terry H. Harmon (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1974). 332-348. See also, Craig Miner. *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000*. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2002). 240-241. Miner also notes that this region developed the moniker "Little Balkans" due to the volume of immigrants.

<sup>7</sup> "Statistics of Population, Occupations, and Agriculture," State of Kansas Census Compendium, K 312 un. 3 (1950) Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas.

this local audience found Haldeman-Julius a repugnant political radical and was mostly hostile to his free-thinking and progressive ideology. In 1939, Raymond Lawrence profiled Emanuel Haldeman-Julius for *Public Opinion Quarterly*, writing that “in his newspaper, Mr. Haldeman-Julius ignores local affairs, because they bore him, and devotes his attention to national and international subjects.”<sup>8</sup> He added, “Toward his immediate environment he is aloof and scornful. Horrified Kansans might be more inclined to focus their aggressions on him if it were not for the fact that he is the owner of the largest business in town.” In contrast to his description of the cavalier publisher, Lawrence described Haldeman-Julius’s local community, Girard, as a place that valued “religion, strict ‘family life,’ nationalism, patriotism, the profit system, and largely the Republican Party. Intellectual and cultural life is bankrupt except for the small group of Haldeman-Julius’s [*sic*] friends.”<sup>9</sup> Haldeman-Julius turned his reputation as a political outlier, and his geographic centrality, into assets, through mass marketing and mail order.

## Personal Background

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius’s life embodied core American values of social mobility, self-reliance, and the fulfillment of childhood dreams through perseverance and hard work. Born to Russian immigrants in 1889, he became enthralled with books at an early age and pursued intellectual stimulation wherever he could find it.<sup>10</sup> His desire for both knowledge and independence exposed him to a wide variety of publications and led him into the profession of

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<sup>8</sup> Raymond D. Lawrence, “Haldeman-Julius has Made Propaganda Profitable,” *The Public Opinion Quarterly* 3, no 1, (1939): 79. For information regarding the political views of Kansans at the time of the 1950 census, see *History of Kansas*.

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence, 79. This does not mean, however, that Haldeman-Julius was especially bitter towards local residents or totally aloof from community concerns. See *America: The Greatest Show on Earth*. (Girard, KS: Haldeman-Julius Publications, 1928). In addition, see Scott, 174.

<sup>10</sup> Dale Herder, “Education for the Masses: The Haldeman-Julius Little Blue Books as Popular Culture During the 1920s” (Ph.D. Dissertation, Michigan State University, 1975), 2. Herder details the circumstances of the family name change Zolajefsky to Julius and the background of Emanuel’s parents. In addition, he describes the earliest memories of EHJ and his early relationship with books and socialism. Scott, 156-158.

journalism. Emanuel described his entrance into the profession of publishing through one of his earliest and fondest encounters with the printed word. As he recalled,

I was about 15 years old, in Philadelphia, my home town. I dropped into a small bookstore at 5<sup>th</sup> and Pine streets, run by Nicholas L. Brown. There, on a table near the door, I picked up the pamphlet edition of Oscar Wilde's "The Ballad of Reading Gaol." I then went across the street into a small, bare park that covered the block. It was winter, and I was cold, but I sat down on a bench and read that booklet straight through.

Despite his early passion for ideas, writing, and publishing, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius endured many missteps and setbacks prior to his ultimate publishing success. In *My Second Twenty-Five Years* he reminisced about the humble roots of his publishing career in New York City. He recalled that the headquarters of *The Call* stood "on Pearl Street – one of the oldest streets in Manhattan" and it "was a sight to make eyes sore. It was old, rickety, musty, rat-infested, dirty, stinking, miserable and scummy." The dilapidated facilities provided "a horrible demonstration of how decayed a hovel could get and still serve as a place of business."<sup>11</sup> He contrasted the squalor of *The Call* headquarters with the Woolworth building down the street, which loomed as "a monument to a man who believed in nickels and dimes. Here was business gone magnificent. Woolworth's offices were imposing enough to satisfy a luxury-loving Florentine in the grandest days of the Renaissance." Haldeman-Julius noticed that though the radical press boasted progressive action and muckracking priorities, its rewards were dwarfed by the opulence of the capitalistic and corporate elite. The theoretical work of Habermas posited a similar disparity between civic-minded participation in the public sphere and the profit-minded publishing which followed.

Within the course of Haldeman-Julius's career, the two motivations merged as he simultaneously pursued social change and personal profit. From "a young fellow of 25, then

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<sup>11</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, *My Second Twenty-Five Years: Instead of a Footnote an Autobiography*. (Girard, KS: Haldeman-Julius Publications, 1949), 13.

working in that ugly *Call* building” to a successful entrepreneurial publisher “‘dubbed the Woolworth . . . [and] Ford of Literature,’” Haldeman-Julius used idealistic publications and a close relationship with his audience to establish himself as one of America’s leading publishers.<sup>12</sup> By 1915, when Louis Kopelin invited him to join *The Appeal to Reason* in Girard, Haldeman-Julius had gone from a neophyte reporter working for radical publications in Philadelphia and Chicago to a veteran New York journalist with an eye for political commentary and readable prose.

By leaving the metropolis of New York, it seemed that Haldeman-Julius was leaving the action and influence of national publishing. He worked for a paper that was based in the country’s largest metropolitan area, was surrounded by a diverse population, and boasted 40,000 readers. He left this seemingly ideal situation in order to join a publication based in a rural western state and surrounded by a primarily conservative and native white population. During the early twentieth century, however, the *Appeal to Reason* stood as the most widely distributed socialist publication in the United States. From its headquarters in rural Kansas, it had used mail distribution to grow to almost a million readers.<sup>13</sup> In 1916, Haldeman-Julius explained to Jane Addams that “After a year or more in N.Y. I was offered the position of editorial writer for the *Appeal to Reason*. I accepted because I wanted the experience of working on a successful weekly of huge circulation.”<sup>14</sup> He believed that the move to Kansas would coincide with broader influence and increased readership. Ultimately, the move did result in greater circulation and financial success, but his achievements would not come through the *Appeal*. Managerial turmoil, shifting national politics, and events in Europe diminished the paper’s readership to the point that

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<sup>12</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *My Second Twenty-Five Years*. 13.

<sup>13</sup> Herder, 15.

<sup>14</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Jane Addams. 8 March 1916. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

Haldeman-Julius's desire for greater circulation and wider audiences could only be realized through his own personal endeavors.

### **Marcet Haldeman**

Haldeman-Julius's position in Girard society became permanent in 1916 when he married local luminary Marcet Haldeman, far from the typical small-town Kansas girl. Marcet's family background and personal experience made her an intellectual match for Emanuel and an influential figure in his publishing success. A niece of Jane Addams, Marcet was educated at Bryn Mawr and raised in a world of "land and wealth and leisured culture." She had spent considerable time pursuing an acting career in New York but returned to Girard in 1915 when she inherited her family's banking interests. During her marriage to Emanuel, she supervised a functioning farm in Cedarville, Illinois, served as his co-author on novels such as *Dust* and *Violence*, and contributed numerous independently authored pieces for *Haldeman-Julius Weekly* and *The American Freeman*, which will be discussed within this chapter.<sup>15</sup> Beyond these collaborative efforts, Emanuel served on the board of the State Bank of Girard and Marcet provided financial backing for his takeover of the *Appeal to Reason*. As she injected personal capital into her husband's burgeoning publishing efforts as Emanuel's career developed and

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<sup>15</sup> Jason Barrett-Fox. "Feminism, Socialism, and Pragmatism in the life of Marcet Haldeman-Julius, 1887-1941" (master's thesis, University of Kansas, 2008). Barrett-Fox illuminates a significant portion of Marcet's literary contribution through an exhaustive analysis of her philosophical beliefs and attitudes. Moreover, he asserts that her inclusion of studies alongside her husband has resulted in a distorted view of her as biographers have tried to fit her into established feminine paradigms. Through a unique attitude, he asserts, she "demonstrated three essential philosophical dispositions: feminism, socialism, and pragmatism, but that like her aunt, she did not practice her philosophy from within the traditional parameters of the academy, preferring instead to take it to the public." 6. Also see Mark Scott, "The Little Blue Books in the War on Bigotry and Bunk," *Kansas History* 1 (autumn 1978): 160.

during the early years of their marriage, this intertwining of personal and professional roles proved common and successful.<sup>16</sup>

Haldeman-Julius bristled, however, when fellow publishers insinuated that Marcet's family money placed him in an enviable financial position.<sup>17</sup> Chester Franklin sought assistance for the fledgling *New York Call* in 1916, and Emanuel tersely replied, "I don't understand how you could have gotten the idea that I am able to make thousand dollar loans. Surely, you don't think that because I married a woman of means that I am therefore able to draw on her. Marcet owns what is hers." He continued to vent frustration at the increasing number of loan requests he had received since his marriage. He told Franklin that he wondered "if I must issue a statement to the public in which I shall explain that I am a believer in feminism for men – that is, that all husbands should be self-supporting," In addition, he explained his financial picture:

I have two thousand dollars in certificates drawing interest. This money is tied up, and I want it to remain so. This money is reserve fund, which I can use when I find myself without a job, or sick, or the like. I get my wages from the *Appeal* – and I pay half of the auto's upkeep. I pay half of everything, except my own immediate expenses, and I pay all of those.<sup>18</sup>

Despite such vociferous protests, Emanuel's marriage to Marcet allowed his publication company to prosper and expand. Her personal wealth provided vital capital investment that

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<sup>16</sup> Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago. There are several separate loan documents in this file that demonstrate *The New Appeal* benefited from a continual line of credit drawn on the Pittsburg State Bank in 1922. They also show that Marcet Haldeman-Julius provided bonds to serve as collateral for these loans. Also, see Barrett-Fox: He asserts that Marcet transferred funds to Emanuel in order to cement the marital bond. Scott, 159-160, details Marcet's overall contribution to the publishing efforts of Emanuel and her own personal political beliefs. Finally, see Herder, 14. Herder repeats a story that plagues the historiography of the marriage between Emanuel and Marcet. Regarding the time Emanuel lived in New York, Herder states "in this heady environment, on the eastern edge of Greenwich Village, Emanuel occasionally met in the elevator, but never spoke to, a beautiful young lady who lived on the floor below him in the Benedick Apartment. Her name was Anna Marcet Haldeman." Unfortunately, neither Emanuel nor Marcet admitted they met prior to their introduction in Girard, following Emanuel's move. While it certainly strains the threads of believability that they lived in such close proximity and never met, it nevertheless persists within the mythology surrounding the couple.

<sup>17</sup> Herder, 24-45.

<sup>18</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Chester Franklin. 26 September 1916. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

prevented bankruptcy on several occasions, and her Kansas connections helped Emanuel establish himself in Girard and boosted his profile with readers.

### ***The Appeal to Reason***

The move to Girard and the *Appeal to Reason* proved a pivotal opportunity for Haldeman-Julius but one that required creativity and flexibility. His early years at the *Appeal* coincided with a downturn in the paper's readership and financial performance. In 1917, Louis Kopelin reported, "Our receipts now are so much below our expenses that drastic action had to be taken to keep the paper from suspending. We are reorganizing the entire office, taking off some of the salaries and economizing in places that we can ill afford."<sup>19</sup> During this period many continued to express faith in the *Appeal's* socialist cause. Allan Benson, a writer let go during the downturn, remained optimistic. He expressed hope that "there is a brighter day coming, and it is not far away. The party and the movement will be bigger and better than ever in two years. Just at the moment the country is stunned. It will find its tongue in a little while." Benson believed that poor economic and social circumstances might help "drive people into the Socialist party by the hundred of thousands. It was this sort of thing that made a big Socialist party in Germany."<sup>20</sup> In order for the paper to continue, Kopelin argued, "something radically different will have to be accomplished by the *Appeal* to survive these unfavorable times. If the injection of a new idea and new blood will not come up to our expectations the paper is doomed." He remained optimistic, however, and vowed, "I am personally going to make one more try before I give up."<sup>21</sup> Despite

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<sup>19</sup> Louis Kopelin to Allan Benson, 19 January 1917. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

<sup>20</sup> Allan Benson to Louis Kopelin. 22 January 1917. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

<sup>21</sup> Louis Kopelin to Allan Benson 19 January 1917. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.



the decline in readership, Haldeman-Julius and the staff of the *Appeal* did not become disillusioned with the potential for published material to unite Americans. Moreover, though they realized that a shift in editorial tone might be required, they remained committed to the basic economic model of mass-marketed, mail-order publications.

In 1918, Kopelin, along with Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius, purchased a controlling interest in the *Appeal to Reason*. Haldeman-Julius borrowed more than half the cost of his purchase from his wife with the promise to return the funds from future profits. Under new leadership, and with a streamlined staff, the paper managed to pull itself back from the brink of financial ruin. Less than a year after purchasing the *Appeal to Reason*, Haldeman-Julius reported a positive turn in the paper's finances and the reinvestment of profits into further marketing. The incorporation documents of the *New Appeal* indicated, "The Managing Editor shall have exclusive management and control of the policy or the paper and the circulation thereof, and shall have charge of all editorials and advertising matter in said newspaper."<sup>22</sup> This arrangement gave Haldeman-Julius, who served as the managing editor, significant power over the direction of the reorganized paper and he routinely operated with an even freer hand in Kopelin's 1918 absence.<sup>23</sup>

The purchase of *Appeal to Reason* did not eliminate all of the obstacles facing the publication. Establishment opposition towards radical publishing continued to calcify following the Bolshevik uprising in Russia, and publications sympathetic to socialism attracted increased scrutiny.<sup>24</sup> Governmental officials eager to quell radical publications' influence and deprive them

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<sup>22</sup> By-laws of the New Appeal Publishing Company. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

<sup>23</sup> Marcet Haldeman-Julius to Euterpe. 27 July, 1918. Haldeman, Mrs. S.A. Mss., Lily Library, University of Indiana.

<sup>24</sup> Regin Schmidt, *Red Scare: FBI and the Origins of Anticommunism in the United States, 1919-1943* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press, 2000).

of an ability to foment domestic unrest used access to mail distribution as a hammer to ensure compliance. In order to maintain acceptance, Kopelin and Haldeman-Julius de-emphasized the radical political rhetoric within the paper and endorsed American involvement in World War I.<sup>25</sup> A controversy surrounding Haldeman-Julius's draft status also likely influenced this decision and will be analyzed in Chapter five. While support of Wilsonian policies alienated many loyal readers, including those who saw it as a betrayal of the socialist cause, it helped ensure the *Appeal to Reason's* continued access to vital shipping.

Haldeman-Julius had been lured to Girard by the prospect of working for a radical socialist paper, but he proved himself a shrewd businessman when he navigated the foundation of a successful publication company during the paper's demise. During late 1918, Haldeman-Julius turned his attention toward other publication methods that ultimately proved more profitable and popular. He refashioned the content of *The Appeal*, ultimately renamed it *Haldeman-Julius Weekly*, and used the publication to advocate an agenda of free-thought and rationalism, appealing to a much larger readership.<sup>26</sup> In addition to widening the appeal of his periodicals, Haldeman-Julius began a book business, which allowed him even greater freedom of thought and expanded influence. Through this venture he targeted different audiences with different publications, plugging into the changing demographics of America. Rather than market a single publication promoting a single ideology, as the socialistic *Appeal to Reason* had done, he created a book catalog of varied offerings. Haldeman-Julius did not focus on the community of Girard in the same way that Chester Franklin focused on Kansas City and William Lindsay White anchored himself in Emporia, through mass marketing and mail-order distribution he

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<sup>25</sup> Elliot Shore, *Talkin' Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism*. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1988), 220-21. Shore argues that "at first they supported the Socialist party's antiwar position; but then, when the United States entered the war, they switched sides and supported the Wilson administration." See also, Miner, 240-242.

<sup>26</sup> Shore, 225.

transcended the local conservative community and emerged as the most prolific and profitable rabble-rousing publisher of the early to mid-twentieth century.

### Approach to Publishing

Haldeman-Julius's desire to increase American's access to quality published materials stemmed from his own encounter with affordably priced literature. He asserted, "While a newspaper reporter, I visited scores of bookstores and always poked around for pamphlets. My meager wage didn't permit me to buy many expensive clothbound books. And always I'd say to myself how nice it would be if such pamphlets could be picked up easily and inexpensively whenever one wanted to buy them."<sup>27</sup> In 1926, he laid bare his core belief in the power of information and freedom to create a better world:

I am optimist enough to believe that the printing press can be used to change the world, whether it will ever be done, I cannot say. But that it can be done, I haven't the least doubt in the world. It is part of my very being – this belief in education as a weapon for genuine progress – that I, for one, shall strive to use presses, ink and paper to spread culture and understanding among those who are capable of using their heads to some purpose.<sup>28</sup>

Beyond a belief in the restorative power of knowledge, Haldeman-Julius hoped to curb the influence of religion within American culture, tracing his personal opposition to a speech given by William Jennings Bryan in 1915. He wrote in *My Second Twenty-Five Years*, "I was only in my teens but I'd read enough of Darwin, Huxley and Spencer to know what a jackass Bryan was making of himself." Moreover, "as for the religious part of his speech, I'd read enough of Ingersoll to know that he was talking a line of rubbish that could satisfy only the least educated portion of the population." Haldeman-Julius further recalled that Bryan seemed "an ignorant, stupid, narrow-minded malicious man with a magnificent voice and the ability to talk in a way

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<sup>27</sup> Albert Mordell, ed. *The World of Haldeman-Julius* (New York: Twayne, 1960), 28.

<sup>28</sup> Herder, 56.

that impressed his medieval minded audiences of yokels and Bible-thumpers.”<sup>29</sup> Haldeman-Julius wanted to free Americans from what he viewed as the clutches of corrupt and stultifying organized religion and challenge them to think for themselves. Anti-religion, anti-superstition, and texts designed to spread rationality became hallmarks of Haldeman-Julius’s book series and proved enduring aspects of his worldview. On the front page of the August 1949 issue of the *American Freeman*, for example, a cartoon encapsulated Haldeman-Julius’s opposition to religion and established American culture. It depicted a skeleton sitting on a throne labeled religion, three prostrate figures labeled movies, press, and radio, with the caption “dry bones of Supernaturalism must be kept enthroned.”<sup>30</sup> In contrast to Chester Franklin, who used his work to urge African Americans arriving in Kansas City to adopt established culture and behaviors, Haldeman-Julius believed that the more people read his work, the less power established culture and behaviors possessed and the more rational and egalitarian America could become.

### **A New Direction: Little Blue Books**

The *Appeal to Reason*’s shift away from socialism did not curtail the rabble rousing of Haldeman-Julius, and he began to de-emphasize the newspaper as it offered increasing political pitfalls alongside diminished financial returns. These changes freed him to expand the scope of his business and look outside southeast Kansas for readership and revenue. In order to sell a large number of publications, Haldeman-Julius first had to attract and identify potential readers. Without access to a large number of retail locations, Haldeman-Julius turned his attention to advertisements, catalogues, and mail order.<sup>31</sup> He gambled that reaching out directly to

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<sup>29</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *My Second Twenty-Five Years*, 17.

<sup>30</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. *American Freeman*. August 1949, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Scott, 164. Haldeman-Julius experimented briefly with establishing Little Blue Book outlets and granting exclusive geographic rights to individuals in exchange for their maintaining a store presence. This, however, proved

downtrodden but industrious Americans represented sound business strategy. He believed that just as he had sought inexpensive and reliable information, there were others like him with a thirst for knowledge that far exceeded their financial means.

An undated letter to Marcet demonstrates that leaving behind the *Appeal* in favor of book publishing offered increased financial return. He explained that “we are going to get \$100,000 for our share of the Appeal, and we shall still have the book business, which will soon be worth far more than the Appeal itself.” Moreover, “it is understood that Louis and I intend to apply the purchase price to the buying of stock and machinery for book publishing. It is part of the agreement that the Appeal Army League . . . will cooperate with us in boosting book business.” The transfer of machinery and facilities allowed the creation of a stand-alone publishing company. The transfusion of names, addresses, and sales leads from the *Appeal* provided an initial sales platform.<sup>32</sup>

Haldeman-Julius’s ideological mission of providing reliable and useful information to a wide swath of Americans required increased circulation. In 1928, he stated, “The Little Blue Books have from the beginning emphasized education in their policy. That series is known far and wide as the University in Print.”<sup>33</sup> The educational mission of the Little Blue Books did not, however, stem purely from an altruistic desire to improve working class Americans. Haldeman-

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unsuccessful in the long term and the vast majority of readers obtained books based on catalog and mail-orders. In addition, Haldeman-Julius also helped “coach” retailers on the best way to market his books. See: Mr. Harold O. Woolever to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. 28 May, 1945 and Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Mr. Harold O. Woolever. 6 October 1945. The E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University. Woolever represented a group of servicemen who were interested in the rights to publish and distribute Haldeman-Julius’s work in Hawaii.

<sup>32</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Marcet Haldeman-Julius. Undated, Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago. Also, see Eric Schocket. “Proletarian Paperbacks: The Little Blue Books and Working-Class Culture.” *College Literature*. Fall 2002, V. 29, 4. Schocket argues that Haldeman-Julius’s move to Little Blue Books came as a result of increased scrutiny shown to radical writing following World War I. He asserts “the Little Blue Books emerged then, quite literally, into the space left by the Espionage Act’s suppression of the radical press. Finding pamphlet publishing safer and more profitable in the conservative political climate of the post-war years, Haldeman-Julius turned over more and more of his press to the less explicitly political Little Blue Books.”

<sup>33</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *First Hundred Million*, 21.

Julius asserted, “I am a business man and not a philanthropist. I invested my capital in the Little Blue Book because I thought it was a sound business venture.”<sup>34</sup> Haldeman-Julius explained to Louis Kopelin that the shift to book publishing offered an increased ideological platform. He wrote:

The Appeal is a tremendous thing in itself. We have gone ahead and put a tremendous amount of ability into a new venture which has been an enormous success – book publishing. The time has come at least when the two must split into separate propositions so that each may grow in its own way.<sup>35</sup>

The sales of the new book series quickly dwarfed the success of the *Appeal to Reason*. Emanuel reported to Marcet in 1919 “that in nine months and 13 days I had sold \$28,000 worth of books, breaking all records. I beat Louis’ 1915 (his last year) by \$7,000. That is to say in 9 months and 13 days I sold more by \$7,000 than Louis sold in 12 months.”<sup>36</sup> The success that Emanuel first enjoyed continued throughout his first decade of business. Within nine years of publication he compiled a catalogue of 1,250 titles with “fully three-fourths of the list protected by copyright.”<sup>37</sup> By the time of his death in 1951, Haldeman-Julius had “almost unbelievably quintupled his 100,000,000 sale figure and had published nearly 2000 different titles in the Little and Big Blue Book series.”<sup>38</sup>

Despite the financial success of Little Blue Books, Haldeman-Julius continued to publish newspapers. Haldeman-Julius’s most direct offering of personal opinions came within the pages of his periodicals. Raymond Lawrence asserted in 1939 that the newspaper publications of

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<sup>34</sup> Ibid., 136.

<sup>35</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Louis Kopelin. Undated. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

<sup>36</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Marcet Haldeman-Julius. 23 August 1919. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago. As a point of comparison, three years later DeWitt Wallace founded the popular magazine *Reader’s Digest* as a national platform for conservative and traditional ideology. Both Haldeman-Julius and Wallace tapped into changing demographics which allowed for periodicals with national audiences.

<sup>37</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *First Hundred Million*, 109.

<sup>38</sup> Herder, 4.

Haldeman-Julius offered “the most direct diffusion of his ideas,” and the “national circulation of the *American Freeman*” essentially constituted “a personal journal with a circulation of 55,000.”<sup>39</sup> The *American Freeman* offered Haldeman-Julius an outlet for his observations on a wide range of editorial subjects, his random musings on daily life, and a direct link to his readership. Further, the first contact between publisher and public came through the multiple weekly and monthly papers. These outlets allowed him to offer supplemental editorial content and generate new interest in his book business. In *The First Hundred Million*, Haldeman-Julius stated, “these publications of mine, especially the *Monthly* and *Quarterly* - are not only valuable to me as advertising mediums for the Little Blue Books and for each other, but their editorial requirements constantly complement the editorial needs of the Little Blue Books.”<sup>40</sup> The symbiotic relationship between Haldeman-Julius publications indicates that he realized a need to tailor his offerings to particular segments of his audience and he aimed for the broadest impact possible.

Widespread distribution, however, depended upon demand and Haldeman-Julius operated under the philosophy that “wherever there are readers – there is a place for the Little Blue Books.”<sup>41</sup> Despite the fact that the combined subscriptions to his periodicals had created a mailing list he described as “that most essential of tools,” Haldeman-Julius recognized that “there was a limit to what could be done with about 175,000 readers.” In order to continue expanding the reach of his pocket pamphlets, Haldeman-Julius placed advertisements in major newspapers. He recalled that “I had an acquaintance in the advertising business place it [his ad] in the Sunday edition of the St. Louis Post-Dispatch, at a cost of about \$150. . . and, at 10c per

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<sup>39</sup> Lawrence, 79. He argues that “the cheap, small book is the most extensively used channel of dissemination. The *American Freeman*, however, contains more explicit expressions.” As a result, the content of both publications must be understood as a reflection of Haldeman-Julius’ worldview.

<sup>40</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *First Hundred Million*, 151.

<sup>41</sup> *Ibid.*, 149.

copy, the Little Blue Books went to town in a big way.” Following the St. Louis advertisement, Haldeman-Julius placed advertisements “in a score of big-circulation newspapers.” He claimed the return on his advertisements allowed him “to buy all kinds of modern machinery, hire new authors, have the booklets set in an outside shop and turned into easily handled plates, have the building enlarged considerably, send out greater quantities of circulars, and in other ways put the enterprise into action on a quantity basis.”<sup>42</sup>

The Little Blue Book series featured a wide array of authors and topics ranging from intellectual and practical to entertaining and comical. Raymond Lawrence analyzed the type of information Haldeman-Julius readers found most attractive. He wrote that

circulation figures show that the most popular categories of books are: (a) sex, which includes love, marriage, passion, men, women, birth control, etc.; (b) self-improvement, which includes better English, ‘education’ in particular subjects such as psychology, philosophy, etc.; (c) free thought, which according to the publisher, means for the readers ‘releasing themselves from the fetters of superstition, religious bigotry, and theological dogmatism.’<sup>43</sup>

Haldeman-Julius distributed information on all aspects of American life: workplace conduct, scientific discoveries, sexual habits, human interaction, and current political events. For example, his catalogs included self-help titles such as #78 *Hints on Public Speaking*, #107 *How to Strengthen Your Mind and Memory*, and #988 *How to Make Money in Wall Street*, which gave readers the tools necessary to improve their lives. Analyses of current politics, such as #1072 *The Truth about William Jennings Bryan*, #1573 *Herbert Hoover: The Failure in the White House*, #1501 *Mussolini and the Pope*, and #4 *Soviet Constitution* sought to inform readers about important issues. Other titles, such as #1176 *Eating for Health, Facts about Vitamins and Calories*, #1272 *The Care of Skin and other General Health Tips*, and #689 through #692 on the sex lives of men, women, and children, addressed questions of personal health. Entertainment

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<sup>42</sup> Mordell, *The World of Haldeman-Julius*, 30.

<sup>43</sup> Lawrence, 79-80.



options ranged from joke books, such as #278 *The Best Jokes about Doctors*, to #535 *How to Play Golf*.<sup>44</sup> Readers could find titles within Haldeman-Julius's catalog that provided practical skills and useful information for modern living. They could also communicate with the authors and other readers via Haldeman-Julius's periodical publications. Thus, the catalog of titles compiled by Haldeman-Julius allowed readers to find information on virtually any subject and combined with his periodical publications to replicate a sense of community for Americans isolated from familial ties or cultural bonds.<sup>45</sup>

For the reader who had fallen through the cracks of America's education system, Haldeman-Julius boasted that the series included all necessary information to gain the equivalent of a high school education. Texts on chemistry, physics, composition, and mathematics replicated the information found in high school classrooms.<sup>46</sup> Despite static interpretations of sometimes rapidly changing fields, the self-help titles offered by Haldeman-Julius dramatically expanded access to intellectual material because they were inexpensive and relatively easy to obtain. Moreover, since these books could be studied anywhere, including the privacy of the home, they offered escape from potentially embarrassing omissions of ignorance.

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<sup>44</sup> The Axe Library. Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. The library's catalog includes a complete list of Blue Book titles. <http://library.pittstate.edu/spcoll/hj-lbb-1.html>.

<sup>45</sup> Schocket, 71. He argues that Haldeman-Julius "brought a heterogeneous mixture of literary culture, self-help, indigenous socialism, and freethought into the homes and lives of farmers and workers who as often as not found themselves on the margins of modernity".

<sup>46</sup> Within recent years scholars have begun to reassess the validity of Haldeman-Julius's education claims. In particular, see W. P. Palmer, "Emanuel Haldeman-Julius and the education of the poor of America" (paper presentation, (New York Conference, Harvard Club of New York July 5, 2006). Palmer's argument appears in his conference notes and also in "Moving to an Extreme: E. Haldeman-Julius and His Little Blue Books," *The International Journal of the Book*, 1 (2003). First, Palmer asserts that "the authors of the little blue books had no training in writing and there was no consistency between the authors in terms of style or approach." The lack of consistency and focus stemmed from efforts to put together this course of study after works had been researched and written. Furthermore, Palmer argues that the disjointed procurement of titles resulted in repetitive information and gross omissions of important facts. Perhaps most serious, titles were published year after year without significant updates to maintain accuracy. He primarily focuses on a set of four chemistry texts to demonstrate the failure to keep abreast of changing scientific knowledge. For example, he states "the discovery of the neutron in 1932, which was included in most texts published or edited after that date, was never corrected in little blue books; post 1932 little blue books thus give an incorrect picture of atomic structure."

Though Haldeman-Julius widely advertised his book business, his standard policy was to refuse outside advertisements within the pages of his books. He explained, “At one time I utilized the space on the back covers of the Little Blue Books themselves for advertising. I could, as a matter of fact, sell this space for a tidy sum annually. But I took my own advertising off, and have allowed no other.”<sup>47</sup> The advertisements that Haldeman-Julius used to sell Little Blue Books highlighted not only the editorial perspective of the text but also the potential benefit for the reader. An advertisement that appeared in the September 1950 issue of the *Critic and Guide*, for example ran under a headline asking “Is Anyone Sexually Normal?” The advertisement explained that the work “is a study of humanity, refined and in the raw, and of the vagaries the human animal recognizes under the labels of normality and abnormality.” Cauldwell’s text “will help you explain to yourself the oddities of your own behavior, showing whether or not they are harmful, anti-social, self-destructive, perverted, and the like.”<sup>48</sup>

Another advertisement, which promoted Joseph McCabe’s *The Foundation of Science*, urged readers to “be sure to get this great popularization of the latest discoveries in the world of science.” The text of the advertisement explained, “here we have Joseph McCabe at his best. The author and scholar is a great authority on science and he has the literary ability to make science an exciting and interesting study.” Readers were promised that McCabe’s work provided “a wonderful knowledge of present scientific thinking.”<sup>49</sup> From a marketing perspective, Haldeman-Julius’s efforts exemplified sound business practice: convince the consumer that the product signifies a necessity and great potential benefit. More important, perhaps, in terms of ideological propaganda, his strategy also made sense from an intellectual perspective: persuade

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<sup>47</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *First Hundred Million*, 151.

<sup>48</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *Critic and Guide*. August 1950.

<sup>49</sup> Marcet Haldeman-Julius. *Spurts from an Interrupted Pen*. (Girard, KS, Haldeman-Julius Publications: 1931). Advertisement appears on the final unnumbered page.

the consumer that others around him or her already have the information and their social advancement depends on an ability to acquire it.

In 1924, Eugene V. Debs praised Haldeman-Julius's work as "the literary achievement of the age and you are entitled to the heartiest commendation from all people who seek truth, love freedom and stand for justice among men."<sup>50</sup> In addition, he said, "I am very greatly impressed by your boundless ambition, which in most any other would be cause of anxious inquiry among his friends. But you have already achieved what was deemed to be the impossible." As a result, Debs concluded, "you are therefore entitled to vast credibility when it comes to announcing what appears to be the [word missing in the original] scheme to flood the entire nation with literature and right that will lead to the ultimate liberation."<sup>51</sup> Haldeman-Julius's book business succeeded because he utilized a clever marketing strategy and targeted an audience that had largely been forgotten by dominant media outlets.

### **The Connection between Little Blue Books and H-J's periodicals**

Once a customer placed a single order, his or her name went onto a mailing list for future publications. Within the first decade of business, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius compiled a list "exceeding half a million names and addresses the world over."<sup>52</sup> He described his approach to book selling in *The First Hundred Million*:

In selling Little Blue Books I must sell to a great many individuals, due to the low profit each separate order represents. If I depend on inquires for catalogs, I have to do the work, in effect, twice. First I have to interest the reader in a catalog, and then, with the catalog, I have to interest him in the books. It is better, I have found, to list some of the more attractive books in the original advertisement, and solicit orders directly on the merit of the product itself. If the reader also wants a free catalogue well and good. But his

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<sup>50</sup> Eugene V. Debs to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. 4 October 1924. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid.

<sup>52</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *First Hundred Million*, 149.

attention is focused on the books, and his business is solicited without any intermediary correspondence.<sup>53</sup>

After establishing a mailing list, Haldeman-Julius then distributed both book catalogues and contribution cards for his periodical publications. For example, a fundraising draft letter began “Dear Friend,” and continued with, “There is one peculiar fact about my writing. Critics agree that it is of high quality, yet commercial editors won’t print it because I insist on expressing ideas that are unpopular with the more bigoted portion of the population.” As a result, “my literary work must be published without regard to the commercial side. How can this be done? By letting my readers send such donations as they can afford.”<sup>54</sup> The direct link between subscriptions and profit gave Haldeman-Julius almost immediate feedback in terms of his ability to connect with his readers. In 1935, he explained to Marcet:

The Freeman now has a real circulation of 25,000, which is extremely encouraging. The readers like the paper very much – the percentage of renewals shows that, as does the volume of letters commending the paper’s editorial text. It’s a sounder property now -- \$1 per year for 25,000, who receive only 12 papers, as against 52 papers per year when it was a weekly.<sup>55</sup>

Rather than use the local community of Girard and its surrounding Crawford County as a base from which to grow, Haldeman-Julius unified disparate Americans through mass marketing, mail order, and shared ideological perspectives. Proving the theories of Bender and Anderson correct, the financial success of Haldeman-Julius’s periodicals demonstrates how communities can spring up around non-geographic factors and shared ideologies. Moreover, Haldeman-Julius embodied Habermas’s view of a democratic public sphere because he urged political activism through

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<sup>53</sup> Ibid., 152.

<sup>54</sup> Undated fundraising letter for *The American Freeman*. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

<sup>55</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Marcet Haldeman-Julius. 30 July 1935. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

publicity and kept the prices of his material extremely low to ensure the widest possible audience.

Haldeman-Julius's periodical publications allowed him complete freedom to report on issues he personally deemed important. He criticized the current offerings of news within America's public sphere and promised his readers a paper that provided "more critical and more extensive" coverage. In 1928, he explained his editorial philosophy, "news as this paper regards it – IMPORTANT NEWS – is a truthful and intelligent report of the main, significant, symptomatic things which in this world of ours." In contrast, he argued, established local media provides "its version of the world's news. A great deal of this news relates to personal scandals, comedies, tragedies, and episodes that while entertaining or shocking or what-not can scarcely be regarded as of real or rare importance."<sup>56</sup>

Attracting readers to his periodical publications represented an important financial lifeline for Emanuel. An undated *American Freeman* advertisement illustrated a portion of his advertising strategy, starting "During the next few weeks I plan to put on a strenuous campaign to increase the circulation of The Freeman. I'd like to add at least 20,000 new names to the list." He further explained that this goal could be achieved "because of two reasons: I will make an offer that is so generous that it will be easy for you and others to each put on at least two new names on The Freeman's subscription list." In addition, "You, who have been reading The Freeman, will probably agree with my assertion that here is a journal that is free-spoken, independent, candid, truth-seeking, and courageous. It makes no compromises with bunk and superstition. It deserves your support."<sup>57</sup> Readers who suggested new names to the *American*

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<sup>56</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. *American Freeman*, December, 1928.

<sup>57</sup> Advertisement. *American Freeman*. Undated. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, KS.

*Freeman* mailing list qualified their friends for a promotional rate that cut in half the yearly subscription price.

Haldeman-Julius believed that readers of the *Freeman* were those “who believe in a free press, who support democratic ideals, who oppose Fascism, and who prefer a publication that isn’t beholden to the country’s economic royalists.” From the successes of his publications, Haldeman-Julius saw evidence “that while falsehood dies hard, the truth isn’t without friends.”<sup>58</sup> Haldeman-Julius’s unique offering and carefully tailored marketing strategy helped him establish readership nationwide. It gave him complete editorial freedom and an ability to communicate directly with his readers. Had he chosen to market his paper within Girard, or even southeast Kansas more generally, opposition to his political views and public persona may well have grown stronger and diminished sales or forced further changes within his published views. Unlike either Chester Franklin or William Lindsay White, who are discussed in Chapters two and three, Haldeman-Julius did not operate a traditional community-based newspaper. Instead, he positioned himself within the public sphere as an independent truth teller and as an oppositional press to standard media. Whereas Franklin desired to unify the African American population surrounding Kansas City, and White targeted Emporians locally and also published nationally through *Reader’s Digest*, Haldeman-Julius’s lack of local community support necessitated his creation of an audience of sympathetic readers throughout the nation.

### **Recruiting New Authors**

Haldeman-Julius hoped to use his publishing company as a tool to enlighten Americans of all income levels, alter backward and bigoted thinking, and correct intellectual shortcomings within the American people. A project of this magnitude, however, required more prose than a

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<sup>58</sup> Lawrence, 80-82.

single man could provide. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius sought written contributions from other scholars whom he then published in both his periodicals and book series. Reprints of classic works, such as *Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam* and Oscar Wilde's *Ballad of Reading Gaol*, provided the first 250 titles published in these series and came from the public domain. In order to expand his operation, however, Haldeman-Julius needed to make contact with active authors and gain access to new titles. Writers such as Joseph McCabe, William Fielding, and D. O. Cauldwell provided a plethora of volumes centered on topics ranging from Catholicism to sexuality. Clarence Darrow, W.E. B. DuBois, and Margaret Sanger provided fewer, but better known, volumes. Many other authors provided works on topics within their area of expertise.<sup>59</sup> The sheer volume of titles available to the public formed the backbone of Haldeman-Julius's marketing strategy. He revealed to a potential business partner that he had a "policy of keeping the public supplied with an ever-growing list. . . It keeps the receipts up and frights off real competition. There will always be publishers with a few titles to challenge us, but our immense list swamps them out in the end."<sup>60</sup>

Through his numerous publications, Haldeman-Julius created a catalog that reflected and advocated personal ideological positions and a specific agenda for America. Raymond Lawrence argued in 1939 that "moral fervor, indignation at popular deception, a strong feeling of identification with humanity, and belief in the 'truth' reveal themselves as motivations." Moreover, Haldeman-Julius focused on the "man in the mass rather than individuals, which accounts for my continued dissertations on international problems, social wrongs, anti-Semitism,

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<sup>59</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *First Hundred Million*, 108-119. Haldmean-Julius discusses, in general, his relationship with authors in a section titled "An Editor and His Writers: Peculiar Editorial Problems of the Little Blue Books." The works that D. O. Cauldwell authored for Haldeman-Julius are explored in greater detail in Chapter four.

<sup>60</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Mr. Harold O. Woolever. 6 October 1945. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, KS.

racial prejudice in general, religious obscurantism, Fascism, democracy, liberalism, free thought, mass education, and the like.” His ability to debunk fallacies, inform the public on various issues, and advocate specific beliefs clearly benefited from a broad national focus because it spread his message to the largest audience possible while capitalizing on an America shifting towards urbanization and a national culture. While Chester Franklin and William Lindsay White also advocated personal ideological positions, neither marshaled a comparable stable of writers to accomplish the task. White, particularly, served the *Reader’s Digest* in much the same way that McCabe or Cauldwell served Haldeman-Julius, as a single author among many, writing pieces subject to final editorial approval prior to publication.

### **Balancing Capitalism and Socialism**

Socialism captivated Haldeman-Julius early in his life and helped satisfy his need for intellectual stimulation and societal analysis.<sup>61</sup> Isaac Goldberg argued in a 1925 profile of Haldeman-Julius that “as uninviting as the average ‘headquarters’ of a local might be, there was usually a bookcase filled with pamphlets and more substantial volumes bearing titles that suggested flight from harsh reality.”<sup>62</sup> Throughout his career, Haldeman-Julius walked a fine line between verifiable involvement with socialist organizations and free-thinking endorsement of varied economic systems. Within his publications he pursued progressive causes with an open mind and an eye toward an egalitarian reorganization of American society. His close association with socialist ideas, however, made him the subject of numerous allegations of anti-American activities, a trend which is explored in Chapter five.

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<sup>61</sup> Herder, 175. Also, see Andrew Neilson Cothran, “The Little Blue Book Man and the Big American Parade: A Biography of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Maryland, 1966).

<sup>62</sup> Isaac Goldberg, “E. Haldeman-Julius: A Psychography,” *Stratford Monthly* IV, no. I (January 1925): 26-27.



Throughout the 1930s, Haldeman-Julius commented on the economic and social unrest facing America. He called for a reorganization of the economy and a renewed emphasis on rational politics, he and urged his readers to resist the false comforts of religion. His business acumen, however, helped drive his political advocacy and characterized the tenor of his frequent editorials. For example, in the January 1933 issue of the *American Freeman*, Haldeman-Julius used his “Around the Table” column to discuss the current state of capitalism:

I don’t share the opinion of many Socialists, who hold that Capitalism is now on its last legs. I don’t care for Capitalism, and I’m hot for a classless society, but I do like to face facts. First of all, Capitalism has always been able to take a lot of punishment and come back for another spasm of so-called prosperity. Can it do this again? I rather fancy the notion that it can, though I don’t pose as a prophet.<sup>63</sup>

Haldeman-Julius lessened the emphasis upon socialism in order to maintain access to postal shipping during World War I and continued to temper the radical nature of his rhetoric during the depression. He wrote that “capitalism is not without friends among the common people.” Taking for granted that corporate interests favored a system that promoted great profit, he believed that “practically every businessman, down to the owner of a peanut-stand believes in private industry. The farmers are broke, but they aren’t radical. They are looking for the day when the bosses will call them back . . . capitalist psychology seems bred in the bone.”<sup>64</sup>

Haldeman-Julius vacillated between full endorsement of socialism and pragmatic recognition of the system’s lack of widespread popularity. His editorials reflected his desire for a shift in the American political landscape. Despite his negative assessment of socialism’s prospects in America, Haldeman-Julius remained optimistic about the power of information to bring about social change. He asserted that “we socialists must adjust ourselves to the slow,

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<sup>63</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, “Around the Table,” *American Freeman*, January, 1933.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, At this point the magazine billed itself as “devoted to social justice and industrial sanity.

steady grind of education . . . we must educate the workers, organize them, build them up a powerful press. Plan for a program over the years.”<sup>65</sup>

The belief that political change demanded the spread of information dovetailed with his commitment to spreading his writing far and wide through mass marketing. In February 1933, Haldeman-Julius told his readers that “there can be no really independent, untrammelled press until they are willing to pay for the value of the reading matter they buy, instead of looking to the advertiser and propagandist to share this expense.”<sup>66</sup> Coincidentally, his publications depended upon reader subscription and direct financial contributions. The corrupting impact of commercialization on the public sphere, which according to Habermas ruined egalitarian access to the space, also manifested itself in the work of William Lindsay White, who is discussed in Chapter three. Both Haldeman-Julius and White, though diametrically opposed politically, believed that the publications they wrote for provided unbiased views of the world because they relied strictly upon reader contributions.<sup>67</sup> The ability of Haldeman-Julius and White to write for publications that did not rely upon advertisers, and in Haldeman-Julius’s case that reflected a personal rather than corporate editorial perspective, proves that access to public debate in early twentieth-century America continued to be open to all.

Haldeman-Julius positioned himself as a purveyor of knowledge rather than an all-knowing opinion maker. By not personally authoring each text, he partially insulated himself from criticism and controversy. When readers criticized one of his authors, Haldeman-Julius assumed the neutral role of editor and defended both his publication and his author without fully

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, “Around the Table.” *American Freeman*. February, 1933. In subsequent issues of the magazine he would use this forum to take on established gender relations, criticize the influence of the Ku Klux Klan, and also defend the Russian economy.

<sup>67</sup> White’s endorsement of this belief is explored in Chapter three. He makes this point about the *Reader’s Digest* explicitly in a letter to Stanley High. William Lindsay White to Stanley High, 23 January 1946, William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

endorsing the problematic positions, a theme that becomes more apparent in Chapter five through the examination of several controversies. This strategy allowed Haldeman-Julius to simultaneously market his products to the largest possible audience while tailoring his message to suit particular groups. His use of a myriad of writers across numerous platforms allowed consumers to pick and choose which they read, while the rest remained insulated from controversy. Unlike Franklin's *Kansas City Call* and White's *Emporia Gazette*, which both marketed the entirety of their content to local communities, Haldeman-Julius offered targeted book lists to specific consumers. For example, he targeted catalogues to medical professionals, educators, and school children. Subsections within his advertisements also divided titles by subject in order to direct readers to their preferred titles. This practice allowed Haldeman-Julius to reach a much larger reading audience, continually adapt his marketing tactics, and segregate his radical political views from works focused on more benign subjects.

### **Topical stories**

Haldeman-Julius used his publications not only to create and educate a captive audience but also to draw attention toward progressive causes and issues he deemed important. "The American Freeman is more than merely a newspaper; it is, first and last, a journal of liberal and progressive opinion; its purpose is to make men think and to scan the world of culture as well as the world of action," he wrote in 1929. The paper adopted "a fighting policy, aimed at contemporary movements that threaten our liberties, telling the full and emphasized truth (which, you know, the daily newspapers often neglect to tell) about current events that deal with questions of free speech, free thought, and the free pursuit of happiness."<sup>68</sup> Haldeman-Julius

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<sup>68</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. *American Freeman*, December 14, 1929.

repeatedly devoted entire editions of *The American Freeman* to controversial issues such as labor unrest, equality in Russia, and the plight of African Americans.

His support of and involvement with the Tom Mooney legal defense effort demonstrates how his publications juxtaposed journalistic fact finding and political considerations. In 1917, Tom Mooney and Warren Billings were convicted of bombing a public rally in San Francisco. Many believed the two had been framed by politicians who opposed their radical politics and involvement with organized labor.<sup>69</sup> As evidence trickled out about the circumstances surrounding both men's convictions, supporters of labor rallied to their side. Haldeman-Julius asserted in 1929 that "Tom Mooney's only 'crime' was in being a labor leader. . . today there is only one reason that can be seen for Mooney's continuance in jail – namely, the persistent cruel effort of the capitalistic terrorizers of California public life to keep him unjustly imprisoned."<sup>70</sup>

Haldeman-Julius believed that his publications could shine a bright light upon the case and increase attention and pressure on public officials in California. In a letter to frequent collaborator Isaac Goldberg, he wrote, "can call series the first complete exposure of the Amazing Mooney Billings Frameup. Also this subhead How Two Innocent Labor Leaders were Railroaded to Prison."<sup>71</sup> Haldeman-Julius told readers on May 10, 1930, that "if the full story of the Mooney case can be carried to the American people they cannot resist the forcible, honest conclusion that simple justice demands the immediate release of Mooney and Billings." Moreover, he urged support for the effort to free Tom Mooney and provided several methods for readers to send monetary contributions. He called for the strong support of the upcoming special issue because "the truth is tragically useless unless it is made known to the people in an immense

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<sup>69</sup> [http://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/Library\\_Bulletin/Nov1989/LB-N89-VClose2.html](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~library/Library_Bulletin/Nov1989/LB-N89-VClose2.html)

<sup>70</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. *American Freeman*, December 14, 1929.

<sup>71</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Isaac Goldberg. 20 May, 1930, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

and commanding way. Truth unknown is truth neglected, truth denied, and truth outraged.”<sup>72</sup> In much the same way Franklin used his editorial page to condemn problematic practices in Kansas City and White advocated political and social change within his writing, Haldeman-Julius’s use of his publications to highlight political and social problems fulfills the Habermasian idea that the public sphere serves as a space for amplifying manifestations of inequality.<sup>73</sup>

The May 31 edition, which became the “Mooney edition,” featured on-scene reporting by Marcet Haldeman-Julius, an overview of the case by John Gunn, and a petition for readers to sign and return to Haldeman-Julius. Coverage of current political events, as well as the clear ideologically driven content found in Haldeman-Julius periodicals, point to the publisher’s role in both illuminating news and creating a national narrative. In addition, Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius became repositories of information regarding the Mooney case and interested parties across the country sought access to their research materials and personal opinions. When University of California student Melvin Young was researching the case for a term paper, The Mooney Defense Committee directed him to Marcet, to whom he wrote February 1931, and advised him to consult the article she had written on the case.<sup>74</sup> Marcet and Emanuel personally campaigned among friends and acquaintances for the defense of Tom Mooney and sought publicity for the case. Eugene Debs wrote to Emanuel in 1924 that “California is notoriously the foul nests of the pirates and profiteers who hold high revel on the Pacific coast and who have corrupted and debauched every institution in the state, especially the courts, to serve their venal and profligate ends.”<sup>75</sup> Marcet frequently corresponded with the incarcerated Tom Mooney and

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<sup>72</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. *American Freeman*. May 17, 1930. 1.

<sup>73</sup> Habermas, *Facts and Norms*, 359. Habermas asserted that the public sphere is “a warning system with sensors that, though unspecialized, are sensitive throughout society.”

<sup>74</sup> Melvin Young to Marcet Haldeman-Julius. 24 February 1931, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

<sup>75</sup> Eugene V. Debs to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. 4 October 1924, Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

his legal advisors. On June 23 she wrote to him that “Emanuel suggests you arrange personally for ad in Guardian. He is willing that you should have benefit of all returns on ad. Had good call with Moyers and writing story for Freeman. We are with you.”<sup>76</sup> Haldeman-Julius’s efforts in the Mooney case, along with those of other influential Americans, achieved success when Mooney received a pardon in 1939. In a broader sense, Haldeman-Julius’s involvement in the Mooney case stemmed from his belief that organized labor and unionization represented a vital need for American workers. Moreover, it demonstrated his belief that his publications could positively influence American public opinion by spreading his political message to a wide audience.

Marcet proved an adept reporter; beyond the Mooney case, Haldeman-Julius used her reporting skills to inform his readers regarding the Scopes trial, lynching, changing gender roles, and Russian socialism.<sup>77</sup> He believed that Marcet’s first hand observations in Russia could prove irrefutable evidence of socialism’s success. Prior to her departure, he wrote letters on his wife’s behalf to well-connected individuals who might assist in her entry into the country. He requested from Upton Sinclair “a letter that she can take with her, in case some bird wants to know who and what she is. Write it so she can use it if there should be some question about letting her into the country.” Noting her past journalistic success, Haldeman-Julius instructed Sinclair to “mention how Marcet covered the Mooney Billings frameup. Give her a good boost[t] – the kind that will help get her over the border. Of course, her articles will be entirely friendly to the Soviet Union.”<sup>78</sup>

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<sup>76</sup> Marcet Haldeman-Julius to Tom Mooney. 23 June 1931, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

<sup>77</sup> For example: Marcet Haldeman-Julius, *The Story of a Lynching: An Exploration of Southern Psychology*, (Haldeman-Julius Publications, Girard, KS: 1927), Marcet Haldeman-Julius, *Judge Ben B. Lindsey on Companionate Marriage*, (Haldeman-Julius Publications, Girard, KS: 1927), and Marcet Haldeman-Julius, *The Girl in the Snappy Roadster*, (Haldeman-Julius Publications, Girard, KS: 1931). See also, Scott, 159-160.

<sup>78</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Upton Sinclair. 1 October 1931, Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

Marcet's trip to Russia in 1931 allowed her to give readers a firsthand view of one of the most controversial countries in the world. She wrote articles in a conversational style, which received praise from assistant editor John Gunn, who told her that "your letter style of reporting your trip is brilliant and vivid and is exactly the way to write the whole of your Russian narrative. Nothing quite please [sic] the reader half so well as just that intimate way of telling it all, with a little breathless note to it which is quite fetching."<sup>79</sup> He expressed confidence that Marcet's writing could illuminate the Russian people for American audiences and expand cross-cultural understanding. Gunn told her:

What interests me most, aside from how the people of Russia look and work and live and behave, is the position concerning freedom of thought and speech in Russia. That is perhaps the most difficult thing to learn from a brief visit. The most important thing of all is what the Soviet system is doing to remake the workers lives on better levels and to teach them how to achieve new aims in history – the history of our time – different from any goal or in centuries held for in capitalist society. Well, you said can't learn everything, but we will all know – and the readers of the Freeman will know – that you have been to Russia! I know that pride makes us see and feel this new country, new because of its new society.<sup>80</sup>

During her trip, Marcet reported on the production potential of Russian factories, mingled with dignitaries, and soaked up local culture. Her observations appeared as multiple columns in the *Freeman* and were also reflected in letters she sent her children. In one, for example, she noted that the communal living arrangements her group shared were necessary because in Russia there were "more people than there is housing accommodation" but the country also had "more jobs than there are people."<sup>81</sup> Marcet's coverage of the Russian people and economy for the *American Freeman* in 1931 stemmed from Haldeman-Julius's desire to defend the Russian people and

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<sup>79</sup> John W. Gunn to Marcet dated 19 October, 1931, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University. Not only was Gunn an assistant editor of Haldeman-Julius Publishing, he also developed a personal relationship with Marcet which may or may not have preceded her divorce from Emanuel. See Barrett-Fox.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid.

<sup>81</sup> Marcet Haldeman-Julius to Alice and Henry, 31 October 1931, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

socialism against American critics. As a result, her analysis must be understood as representations of her personal ideological belief and the publication's editorial position in much the same way that William Lindsay White's 1946 *Report on the Russians* which is examined in Chapter three, promoted a negative assessment of Russia. The importance of Marcet's reporting rests not on her accuracy in reflecting Russian political and social equality but on the reasons for her trip. The focus on international political events within Haldeman-Julius's publications demonstrates clearly that he believed his paper could influence American opinion and attract readers based on an alternative perspective not found in other media outlets.

In addition, Marcet personally campaigned for social reforms and challenged traditional beliefs in a variety of contexts.<sup>82</sup> In terms of her affinity for socialism, she delineated her personal politics in a 1940 letter to her husband. She told him that she had enjoyed a meeting with "a group of my Pittsburg Communist friends" and she had explained to them that "while I still believed in communism and next to the American people liked the Russian people better than any other, I felt that Stalin had become so drunk with power and ambition that he had betrayed the heritage left the U.S.S.R. by its great dreamer-statesmen." Further, she explained that "you can never eliminate the human equation and Stalin, Hitler, Mussolini and Roosevelt have all let their prestige and positions go to their heads. The Russian people are no longer told the truth. The boss and men that died in Finland were sacrifices by Stalin's own personal ambition." Further, she told Haldeman-Julius that in the meeting she had "agreed with them on so many points – as for instance that England is fighting, not for democracy, but to maintain the status quo of her ruling class."<sup>83</sup> She closed her letter with:

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<sup>82</sup> Scott, 168-169. See Barrett-Fox, ad passim.

<sup>83</sup> Marcet Haldeman-Julius to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. 3 May 1940, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.



I told them: ‘My conservative friends think I am a flaming red and I suppose you think I am so pink that I am almost white – but I try to seek out the truth. MY worry for you young people is that you are letting your minds be bound and crippled because you feel you must adhere to the Party Line – right or wrong. Remember: I love Russia and saw by the principles for which Lenin stood – but I despise Stalin.’<sup>84</sup>

Marcet shared her husband’s desire for ideological freedom and used her own writing to further the cause of free-thought. She contributed topical stories to Haldeman-Julius’s publications and also served as a surrogate for Haldeman-Julius in relation to his readers.

Marcet’s reporting also proved useful in highlighting the need for social change closer to home. Through correspondence with university leaders, current and former students, and racial leaders, Marcet produced a scathing call for integration on Kansas college campuses in 1927.<sup>85</sup> Published initially in the *Haldeman-Julius Weekly*, and later as a Little Blue Book, “What Negro Students Endure in Kansas” argued that university officials willingly catered to local populations who demanded segregation, denied African-American students academic opportunity, and generally engaged a policy opposed to the open-minded ideals of higher education.<sup>86</sup> Reader reaction poured in and reflected appreciation for her efforts to draw attention to an often overlooked problem. A student wrote to update her on the seating arrangements in the University of Kansas Union and to say that “we are still thinking of you here and feel much better off for having met you.”<sup>87</sup> A Topeka reader, Amos Baker, told her in November 1927 that “I note with great interest, some of the statements you made and congratulate you for having the backbone to

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<sup>84</sup> Ibid.

<sup>85</sup> James Wheldon Johnson to Marcet, 19 October 1927. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University. Johnson stated that “I am going to refer your letter to Dr. Du Bois for the answers to your questions. He has been for two years making a study of education conditions as they concern colored students and I am sure he will be a better source of information than anybody else in our office.”

<sup>86</sup> Marcet Haldeman-Julius, “What the Negro Students in Kansas Endure” *The Haldeman-Julius Monthly*, July, 1927. Also see Barrett-Fox, 79-84. He notes that both children of Emanuel and Marcet, Alice and Henry, attended the University of Kansas. Also see correspondence between University of Kansas Chancellor E.H. Lindley and Marcet Haldeman-Julius in 1927. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

<sup>87</sup> F. Corurel Webster to “Mrs. Haldeman-Julius,” 8 November 1927, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

express your news concerning the Negroes that attend these institutions and also that interest you are taking in my people.” He added, “I am interested in this matter because I have two girls one of whom will finish Topeka high school this June and wife and I are thinking of sending her to one of these schools you mentioned but if what you say is true, and I do not doubt your word, I am asking you for some advice.” He concluded with:

What we want to know is a way to remedy these [conditions] and you know the remedy must come through your people, as we are powerless to do anything without your help, and advice. I know you are interested in the Negroes welfare or you would not have taken the time or the energy to make this investigation. Thanking you in advance for the interest you have shown in our poor struggling race and pray to God that you may give some way to help us to be looked up as men and women.”<sup>88</sup>

Like Haldeman-Julius’s writing, Marcet’s writing stemmed from a simultaneous desire to gain personal profit and political influence. She leaned toward socialism, but she ultimately hoped to use her writing to break down societal barriers and increase the open-mindedness of the American people. When Haldeman-Julius married Marcet he gained more than a spouse. During his career she provided him a connection to the local community of Girard, financial backing, and her presence enhanced the success of his publications through effective reporting. The tempestuous personal relationship between Emanuel and Marcet, however, provides an example of the difficulty created by a complex intermingling of private and public relationships.<sup>89</sup> Though both Chester Franklin and William Lindsay White married professionally accomplished women, neither man relied upon his wife’s contributions as heavily as Haldeman-Julius.

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<sup>88</sup> Amos Baker to Marcet Haldeman-Julius, 15 November, 1927, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

<sup>89</sup> Barrette-Fox, 33-34. Emanuel and Marcet separated in the early 1930s, though they remained living in the same Girard home and collaborating professionally. Marcet filed suit against Emanuel in 1933 in an attempt to compel his payment of alimony. Also see Barrett-Fox, 66. Marcet died in 1941 from breast cancer.

## Reader Interaction

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius placed his opinions into the public sphere because he simultaneously wanted to turn a profit and influence America. Believing that Americans of all types wanted affordable literature, he produced a voluminous catalog of works designed to fulfill intellectual and practical needs.<sup>90</sup> He established a reputation for truth-telling and debunking, which generated reader interest in both his opinion and background. To satisfy demand and stoke future interest, Haldeman-Julius regularly published a wide variety of reader letters throughout his numerous publications. Reader questions generally asked about personal information regarding Emanuel or Marcet, political issues and partisan problems, religion, and future publications.

Readers often wrote to ask personal details about Haldeman-Julius's family, daily life, and interests. In 1921, Marcet responded to a reader's inquiry into his personal character by describing her husband as "a youthful chap of medium height; he smokes a pipe, tells a good story, enjoys motoring and meals (he is an epicurean enthusiast regarding the latter), skips through the Sunday papers and reads the *Living Age* and *Nation*."<sup>91</sup> Writing directly to Emanuel three years later, a reader inquired, "Here is what I am eager to know: Where and when you were born; your parentage – how much you are indebted to your parents through inheritance and through wise direction during your boyhood days? Are you a self-made man in the sense that Horace Greeley, Lincoln, Jack London and Mark Twain were, or did you pass from public school to high school and then through college?" He continued, "How soon did your taste for

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<sup>90</sup> Scott, 162.

<sup>91</sup> Marcet Haldeman-Julius to Mrs. Hertzler. 28 June 1921, Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago. For additional examples of Marcet writing about Emanuel, see Marcet Haldeman-Julius, "What the Editor's Wife is Thinking About," *Little Blue Book* #809. (Girard, KS: Haldeman-Julius Publications, 1931). Also, see Barrett-Fox, 31-32. Barrett-Fox asserts that much of Marcet's early writing was answering reader letters, which often came from female admirers of Haldeman-Julius.

books manifest itself, and at what age did you become conscious of literary ability? What trials did you encounter and what obstacles did you have to overcome before your literary talent was acknowledged by those competent to pass judgment upon it?”<sup>92</sup>

Following Haldeman-Julius’s coverage of the Mooney case, readers suggested other cases worthy of his attention. Elizabeth Attridge wrote in 1933 expressing pro-Mooney solidarity and updating Marcet on a case in the state of Washington. Attridge explained, “All of the men are now out of Walla Walla except one, and he refused to leave . . . one of the boys is here in Madison out of work and I am helping him to keep out of a public bread line.” In addition, Attridge asked for the return of contributions she had made previously to Marcet’s efforts to cover the Washington case. Attridge’s letter did not express resentment at having contributed to Marcet, nor ask for the money back on her own behalf, but explained simply that “I sent three dollars (\$3.00) to you for a trip to Washington, \$1.00 at one time and \$2.00 another, and should be glad I you would return it, as I need it now to help this boy.” She also noted, “I have been out of work for months myself, so haven’t so much to give to worthy causes as I should like as I’m a working woman and have lost most of my life’s savings in the depression crash.”<sup>93</sup> Haldeman-Julius’s publications generated interest in a wide variety of progressive causes and created a clearinghouse for readers to address issues that needed further media scrutiny.

Frequently, published reader correspondence sought advice from Haldeman-Julius or other readers regarding personal problems. Just as frequently, the advice he dished out came with comments and corrections from other readers. Reader Myrtle E. Croyall took Haldeman-Julius to task for the way he had answered the question of a lovelorn woman. She wrote, “Your article in

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<sup>92</sup> Remington Congan (or Congas) to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius (actually addressed ‘Dear Editor’) 18 July 1924. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

<sup>93</sup> Elizabeth Attridge to Marcet Haldeman-Julius. 24, Nov 1933. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

the last Weekly about the Lewisville woman wanting your advice about how to keep her husband, has invited from me a reply.” She chastised Haldeman-Julius for his flippant and sarcastic remarks, writing “I know that you were only joking in what you replied to her question. But that you meant exactly the opposite, unless I am very much mistaken in your knowledge of human psychology.”<sup>94</sup> Croyall’s letter went on to explain that just like the woman in Lewisville, she had endured a husband with a wandering eye and wanted to share how she had overcome it. Croyall explained that she pursued a dual strategy of befriending the woman her husband had taken an interest in and also flirting with that woman’s husband or her own husband’s friends. She instructed, “if there is another woman, find her and get acquainted with her, invite her to your house in the company of your husband (make her love you), exert yourself to be gracious and kind.” This plan, implemented effectively with “pretty, fresh gingham house dresses and little nighties and everything,” resulted in a husband who realized that he still loved his wife and a potential mistress who “learned to like you, will see how things are going will say to herself, ‘Well as they seem so well satisfied, guess I better beat it.’”<sup>95</sup>

Not all readers, however, valued the editorial perspective of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius or his publications. In order to appeal to the widest possible audience, Haldeman-Julius often presented himself as a chameleon in terms of political ideology. He received a letter in 1924 from Mrs. A. Steger, who alleged that Haldeman-Julius “is an egotist, or bigot of the ‘first water.’” Not only did Steger critique Haldeman-Julius’s attitude and arrogance, she also alleged, “From Dunn’s advertising of E. Haldeman Julius and his business, it would seem that Mr. E. Haldeman-Julius’ anti capitalistic principles are being capitalized and that his hatred of money and the money power is being minted.” These complaints indicate that Mrs. Steger believed

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<sup>94</sup> Myrtle E. Croyall to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. 25 September 1924. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

Haldeman-Julius's expansion of the publishing business compromised his socialist reputation.<sup>96</sup> Of course, not even this tempering of belief could appeal to everyone. Haldeman-Julius's desire to debunk popular misconceptions and religious superstitions also alienated a significant portion of the American public. Earl Knebel of Dunkerton, Iowa, lambasted Emanuel in an undated letter. Knebel asserted that "an enemy of mine has sent me a copy of your American Freeman, and I dare say that the minds of such writers as those that write for such a paper are on the level with the lowest animal and no better." Not only did Knebel take issue with the anti-religious sentiment found in the publication, he also alleged that articles were "written by low-brow writers" and "read by the lower forms of being who are half-baked and only about half there. Why not try to build up the other half that are lacking instead of trying to tear down the little that is left?" Knebel did not seek to participate in a communal exchange of ideas between reader and editor or to alter the perspective of Haldeman-Julius. He ended his letter with "I look for you to crawl back in your hole."<sup>97</sup>

In contrast to such vitriolic condemnation, Haldeman-Julius's publications also inspired effusive praise and devotion. Edwin H. Puchta wrote to Emanuel in 1926, "I read with great interest your 'unusual' publications . . . and hope to be a subscriber for many years to come (or until Saint Peter beckons, calls, or whistles or rather until 'hell freezes over')." Puchta not only took great interest in the recent articles, but eagerly anticipated forthcoming information, telling Haldeman-Julius "personally I wish you would publish this new magazine (to be known as the

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<sup>96</sup> Mrs. A. Steger to *Haldeman-Julius Weekly*. 17 July 1924. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

<sup>97</sup> Earl Knebel to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. Undated. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

Quarterly?) every two months as (others have already suggested.) Call it the Sixthly if you want to (or Bi-monthly); call it anything but let's get it as often as possible.”<sup>98</sup>

Another fawning letter came in 1926 from Jack Conroy, who wrote that “the other day I opened a copy of the phenomenal ‘Liberty’ and saw emblazoned across two full pages a Little Blue Book advertisement.” Conroy reckoned that if “Haldeman-Julius is able to afford a six thousand dollar advertisement not once but several times and expects to make it back by selling culture at four cents a throw! Surely the nation is not populated entirely by morons.”<sup>99</sup> Moreover, Conroy’s letter described his encounter with “a workingman . . . deeply engrossed in a Blue Book: ‘Contemporary Philosophy.’” Upon approaching the man, Conroy said, “He started furtively as though apprehended red-handed in some grievous misdemeanor and made an ineffectual attempt to conceal the book, but when I began to talk to him about the subject under consideration, he warmed up.” The man told Conroy that he hid the book because his buddies might ridicule his choice. Thus, his embarrassment at his own ignorance prompted him to simultaneously seek out knowledge and to hide his need for it.

Based on his interaction with the workingman philosopher, Conroy explained that he believed Little Blue Books had helped educate average Americans and strengthen the nation. He believed this encounter could have happened in any location because throughout the country there must be “millions of men like this, afraid to confess their love for knowledge for fear of being branded heretical, ‘queer,’ ‘stuck-up,’ or worse.” In Conroy’s view, this genuine interest in knowledge and self-improvement meant that “there are more genuinely cultured men among the laboring classes than among the bourgeoisie middle class of business men, realtors, Rotarians,

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<sup>98</sup> Edwin H. Puchta to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, 13 March 1926. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

<sup>99</sup> Jack Conroy to Mrs. Haldeman-Julius, 24 October 1926, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

and politicians.” This fact did not constitute common knowledge, however, because “in the case of the worker he, in self-defense, conceals his learning, while the bourgeoisie, by means of magnificent uncut copies of the classics and all the other exterior hallmarks of education endeavors to convey the impression of an intellectual enlightenment he does not possess.”<sup>100</sup> Conroy’s letter provides ample evidence of the average American’s interactions with Little Blue Books.

The wide variety of letters published in Haldeman-Julius’s publications demonstrates how Haldeman-Julius fostered a sense of community among his readers and how his publications became a type of clearinghouse for political and social problems. Readers were informed about issues that escaped coverage in most media outlets and also were able to suggest topics for future issues and interact with the publishers. Rather than limiting reader letters to timely comments on news stories or local issues, as a traditional community-based newspaper editorial page might, Haldeman-Julius expanded reader participation in his publications and fostered a sense of interactive involvement among his audience. Through direct communication with readers, Haldeman-Julius became a part of his readers’ lives and developed an intensely personal connection with his audience. Readers showed an interest in Haldeman-Julius’s background, sought his advice on personal matters, and asked him to comment on current events. Thus, the pages of his publication became a community forum where readers not only interacted directly with the editor but also spoke among themselves at a time when widespread access to mass communication did not exist.<sup>101</sup> Haldeman-Julius’s publications simultaneously informed his readers in the Habermasian manner and also formed a community along the theoretical lines of

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<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

<sup>101</sup> For other examples of how Haldeman-Julius published reader correspondence, see Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. *American Freeman*, June, 1940. 1. The magazine was billed as “The question and answer magazine” and featured prominently reader questions followed by Haldeman-Julius’s answers. Topics ran the gamut from current events, questions concerning specific political figures, gender relations, religion, etc.



Bender and Anderson. Ultimately, he served as confidant, resource, political ally, and friend. This personal connection, which became part of the publications, went farther than the correspondence William Lindsay White had with readers and amplified the impact of Haldeman-Julius's influence within the public sphere.

## Conclusion

In an era when American culture grappled with increasing diversity in increasingly urban environments and began to rely upon national publications for a sense of community, Haldeman-Julius's publications filled a void. He expanded average American's access to knowledge and information and provided intellectual sustenance. The list of readers Haldeman-Julius compiled gave him unfettered access to the public sphere and helped him sell millions of newspapers and books. Through direct communication with his audience, he created bonds of community for Americans on the margins of society, replicated a sense of community, and also shared his unique political perspective.<sup>102</sup> Looking back over his career, however, Haldeman-Julius seemed a bit divided over his own legacy. He refused to see himself as a pioneer or visionary, stating that he was simply "a small-town printer who happens to think ideas count."<sup>103</sup> Yet, he also proudly proclaimed that he had "done more to bring education to the masses than any other individual since the invention of printing."<sup>104</sup>

John E. McWilliams, in the 1945 issue of *Controversy*, described Haldeman-Julius as someone whose "place as a pioneer publisher is undoubtedly established. The practice of printing good literature at cheap prices will continue long after E. Haldeman-Julius, and perhaps even the

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<sup>102</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Isaac Goldberg. 22 June 1935, E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University.

<sup>103</sup> Mordell, *The World of Haldeman-Julius*, 31.

<sup>104</sup> Herder, 4.

Little Blue Books are gone. Once the path is blazed, it is easy to follow as well as very profitable. His work will be carried on.”<sup>105</sup> Despite the high praise, McWilliams claimed Haldeman-Julius’s success was a product of a unique period in American history, arguing that even though Haldeman-Julius had been “once a considerable factor in American thought, his influence waned considerably since the 1920’s and 30’s.” He added, “Debunking and iconoclasm are not art, but the symptoms of an age. The debunker rode to power on the crest of the disillusionment movement which followed World War I.”<sup>106</sup>

Chapter four analyzes the continued influence of Haldeman-Julius’s career and trajectory of his publications in the 1950s and 1960s. As American culture shifted toward conformity and national unity rather than free-thought and possibility, the radical aspects of Haldeman-Julius’s politics became problematic, and his adversarial relationship with establishment media and government frequently embroiled him in controversy. Following Emanuel’s death, his son Henry Haldeman suffered through an obscenity trial based on books first published by his father in the 1940s. Though the case forced the company into bankruptcy, it reveals a shift toward a national standard of obscenity within American jurisprudence. Thus, the company that had started as an intellectual crusade to open the minds of Americans ended as a martyr in the quest for free expression.

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<sup>105</sup> John E. McWilliams, “E. Haldeman-Julius As I Know Him,” *Controversy* II, no. 1 (July, 1945): 1-4.

<sup>106</sup> *Ibid.*

## Chapter 2: Chester Franklin and the *Kansas City Call*

In 1924, Chester Franklin reminded his readers that “the relationship between a newspaper and the public are essentially mutual. Each should help the other, each depends upon the other.” Franklin further explained that the creation of a mutually beneficial publication “has been my thought ever since the establishing of THE CALL . . . I know now that you want a newspaper that will be loyal to the race and that you will support it.”<sup>1</sup> This reciprocal relationship, however, went beyond ensuring his own financial prosperity and providing his readers with relevant information. The success of his newspaper depended on improving Kansas City and advancing the cause of African Americans. This chapter argues that Chester Franklin initially established the *Kansas City Call* in order to fulfill the needs of his local community. In response to the city’s increased numbers of African Americans, most of whom arrived from the Deep South, Franklin sought a public platform that would allow him to communicate with recent arrivals and unite the African American community via the common values of hard work, individualism, and morality. Franklin believed that Kansas City’s African American population could earn equality if they adopted the acceptable behaviors and values of white Kansas Citians.

As unity within the local community grew, and as his paper expanded regionally, Franklin increasingly focused on national issues. In 1950, as Kansas City celebrated its centennial anniversary, and thirty-one years after founding the *Kansas City Call*, Chester Franklin retired. The final section of this chapter examines how the *Kansas City Call* largely ignored the Kansas Centennial in favor of a broader focus on African-American educational equality. What had begun as an effort to carve a foothold within the local public sphere for the African American community had shifted by 1950 to an outlet for advancing the national push toward African American equality.

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<sup>1</sup> Chester Franklin, “Signs Read Straight Ahead,” *Kansas City Call*, January 4, 1924.

## Establishing an African American Press

As America's urban population expanded in the early twentieth-century, America's cities were increasingly split. On one hand, a dominant white population governed cities and took advantage of social opportunities and recreational enjoyment. On the other hand, urban areas were also home to a growing African American population that was locked out of the halls of political power and denied access to the majority of public meeting spaces and entertainment venues. Jürgen Habermas's original conception of the public sphere depended upon social equals meeting in public settings to discuss issues of general importance. His theory did not take into account individuals who were excluded from dominant society or minorities who were unable to enter public meeting places. As a result, many scholars have argued that Habermas's theory does not maintain relevance when translated to an ideologically and racially diverse society.<sup>2</sup>

Though Habermas personally did not conceive of an all-encompassing public sphere, a wide cross-section of American society has used public discourse to amplify social problems, influence large groups, and connect with community members. An analysis of how African Americans created a platform for their participation requires viewing the public sphere as an elastic term that can incorporate all efforts at public discourse. Through the establishment of an independent press, African Americans created a method of uniting themselves and entering the public sphere. Leonard Ray Teel argues that early African American newspapers "specialized in reporting community social news generally ignored by the white press" and a variety of local political concerns.<sup>3</sup> Particularly indicative of the expansion of public discourse, the growth of the African American press in the early twentieth-century demonstrates the elasticity of the American public sphere.

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<sup>2</sup> The exclusionary aspects of Habermas's theory represent one of the prime arguments of critics. See Nancy Fraser, "Rethinking the Public Sphere," ad passim.

<sup>3</sup> Leonard Ray Teel, *The Public Press, 1900-1945* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2006). 47.

Understanding the impact of the African American press is enhanced through the addition of community as an analytical framework. Though they were excluded from public arenas of influence, community organizations became the basis for an internal strength. The establishment of a local African American press focused on the needs of their race and served as a method of establishing a public platform, engaging with dominant society, and unifying the local community. African American newspapers' access to the public sphere depended upon initiative, opportunity, and vision. The prosperity achieved by Franklin and the *Kansas City Call* depended upon a familial background in printing, an unwillingness of established media outlets to cover African Americans, and a consistent editorial philosophy.<sup>4</sup>

### **Chester Franklin and the *Kansas City Call***

Chester Franklin represented the driving force behind the *Kansas City Call*'s editorial perspective and financial success. Born in Texas in 1880, Franklin was only seven years old when his parents decided to move north. The family eventually settled in Nebraska, where he spent his formative years and attended both high school and college. Franklin became hooked on the newspaper business while working at his father's *Omaha Enterprise*. During Franklin's second year at the University of Nebraska, his father's failing health compelled the family to move again. Franklin withdrew from school and moved with his family to Colorado. The family

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<sup>4</sup> Noel Avon Wilson, "The Kansas City Call: An Inside View of the Negro Market" (PhD. Dissertation, University of Illinois, 1968), 14. Wilson explains that "the founding of the newspaper occurred before Negroes indulged in golf, and Franklin took exercise by playing volleyball at the Paseo YMCA. One day as the men were changing their clothes after a game he announced: 'Fellows, I'm going to begin publishing a newspaper next week and I'd like all of you to give me a lift by subscribing to it.' He walked out of the YMCA with several subscriptions."48-53. Also see George Everett Slavens, "Missouri," in *The Black Press in the South, 1865-1979*, ed. by Henry Lewis Suggs (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1983), 211. Slavens succinctly states why most of Missouri's African American papers were headquartered in either Kansas City or St. Louis; "most of the state's blacks lived there, and the cities were more attractive to the kind of leaders who were likely to establish newspapers."

again entered the newspaper business and operated a publication called *The Star*.<sup>5</sup> Through involvement with his family's business ventures, most notably, in Colorado where he held positions ranging from chief editor to distribution manager, Franklin became adept at all aspects of the printing business.<sup>6</sup> Franklin's migratory upbringing mirrored Haldeman-Julius's short stints in various locations and prevented the development of deep roots in any single community. From an early age Franklin learned to balance ever-changing local issues with national issues that appealed to broad audiences.

Faced with a relatively small local African American readership in Colorado, Franklin began to search for a more suitable metropolitan area to call home. In 1913 he moved to Kansas City. Delayed by World War I, and the challenges of starting over in a new city, Franklin spent the next six years establishing himself in the Kansas City community as a printer.<sup>7</sup> Noel Wilson asserts that by 1919 Franklin had established a laudable professional reputation and that "when he announced to his associates that he was going to begin publishing a newspaper, many people subscribed before the first printing." The initial issue of the *Kansas City Call* "was a four-page sheet. 2,000 copies were printed and sold for 5 cents a copy."<sup>8</sup> From the first issue, the paper represented the perspective of the city's African American population and became an advocate for its concerns.

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<sup>5</sup> Thomas D. Wilson, "A History of the Partisanship of Chester A. Franklin." M.A. Thesis. Central Missouri State University. 1991. 15. Of particular interest here, Wilson details the early events which marked Franklin's involvement in publishing. More generally, Wilson explores the correspondence between Franklin and Harry Truman. He argues that Franklin remained true to Republican politics for the majority of his life and career, in opposition to the moves of many African American leaders. Also see Charles Coulter, "*Take Up the Black man's burden*": *Kansas City's African American communities*. (University of Missouri Press, 2006) 107-108.

<sup>6</sup> "Chester Franklin Biography," Chester A. Franklin Papers. Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri. Also see Slavens, 211. Slavens succinctly states why most of Missouri's African American papers were headquartered in either Kansas City or St. Louis; "most of the state's blacks lived there, and the cities were more attractive to the kind of leaders who were likely to establish newspapers."

<sup>7</sup> Noel Wilson, 16.

<sup>8</sup> "Chester Franklin Biography," Chester A. Franklin Papers. Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri.

In 1925, six years after the inaugural issue of the *Kansas City Call* appeared, Franklin took another plunge, and he got married. Franklin had become smitten with Ada Crogman when the two met following a performance of her show, “The Milestones of a Race,” in Kansas City. The show chronicled the history of the African American people, beginning in Africa and culminating with World War I battlefields, and promoted achievement and racial solidarity.<sup>9</sup> One reviewer in Ohio proclaimed that “I cannot speak too highly of Miss Crogman. Her presence amongst us has been a blessing. She has won her own people and she has won the white people.”<sup>10</sup> Another noted that:

I can unqualifiedly recommend Miss Ada Crogman as a true artist in the handling of her subject and I would add that her enthusiasm goes beyond commercialism and into the great field of true democratic unselfishness in that her only hope is for the closer bond of comradeship and helpfulness in allowing the colored people a place in the affairs of the nation.<sup>11</sup>

A native of Atlanta, Crogman had graduated from Clark University, where her father was president, and also Emerson University. As an educated woman, and as a woman concerned with the state of the African American people and their role in American society, she became an instrumental part of Franklin’s professional life as well as a personal confidant.<sup>12</sup>

After living in several Midwestern states and working at several other papers, Chester Franklin established his publication in Kansas City the same year as Haldeman-Julius began his publishing endeavor. Unlike Haldeman-Julius, who relied upon mass-marketing and voluminous publications to attract readers, Franklin relied on the local community for his audience, advertisers, and stories. He targeted the expanding African American population of Kansas City

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<sup>9</sup> Chester A. Franklin Collection. The Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri. There are an assortment of programs, reviews, and photos depicting Crogman’s pageant.

<sup>10</sup> Wm. H. Hudnut to Roy Smith Wallace, 29 May 1924. Chester A. Franklin Collection. The Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri

<sup>11</sup> To Whom it may concern from J. C. Drury, 30 May 1924. Chester A. Franklin Collection. The Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri

<sup>12</sup> Coulter, 111. Also see “The History of the Kansas City Call,” The Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri. Crogman, along with Lucile Bluford, led the paper following Franklin’s death in 1955.

and turned to those closest to him for seed money. Noel Wilson explains that once Franklin decided to start a newspaper, he approached personal friends and persuaded them to sign up as his initial subscribers. Franklin's direct approach became a hallmark of his publishing style and "established a personal relationship between editor and reader which had been the basic ingredient of *The Call*'s circulation strength."<sup>13</sup> The relationship between the *Kansas City Call* and the local community mirrors the connection between the *Emporia Gazette* and the city of Emporia, which will be explored in Chapter three. Franklin's creation of a new public sphere platform, however, differed significantly from the efforts of William Lindsay White, who inherited the paper after his father had made the publication a success. Whereas White built on his involvement with the *Emporia Gazette* by joining a well-known national magazine, when Franklin sought a broader audience he simply expanded his existing newspaper.

### **The Local Community**

The success of any newspaper geared toward the local community depends upon the existence of an interested population and the ability of that population to consistently purchase the publication. In the case of Kansas City, a growing African American population lived on both sides of the state line dividing Missouri and Kansas and provided a fertile market for Franklin's *Kansas City Call*. Wilson explains that in 1913 "there were approximately 25,000 Negroes on the Missouri side. They represented a little more than nine per cent of the city's population." The low number of African Americans soon grew, however, as "Kansas City was in the middle of several decades of heavy migration from the south."<sup>14</sup> A year after Franklin began publication, the 1920 census found that 101,177 lived within the Kansas City metro area

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<sup>13</sup> Noel Wilson, 14.

<sup>14</sup> Noel Wilson, 10. Wilson's work includes a table detailing the overall population expansion within Kansas City between 1860 and 1940 and the specific expansion within the African American population.



residents and the population which was 14.2 percent African American. Just west of Kansas City in Wyandotte County, 122,218 people resided and the population was 13.7 percent African American.<sup>15</sup> As a result of the area's population growth and increasing diversity, Franklin's publication tapped into a sizeable local audience that was united through ethnicity. Unlike Haldeman-Julius, who hoped to unite disparate individuals through a national focus on shared ideology, Franklin approached community through an emphasis on geographic location and ethnic commonality. This did not represent a return to "island communities," or isolation on Franklin's part, however, because he hoped to use his public sphere platform to inoculate the African American community in Kansas City with the ideological and cultural values required of full citizens of Kansas City. Franklin viewed the *Kansas City Call* as a mechanism of community integration within Kansas City.

The success of any new business venture depends not only on customers but also their purchasing power. When compared to white residents of Kansas City, Wilson notes the relative lack of spending power among African Americans. He states that "the per capita wealth of the Negroes was \$80.61, while the per capita wealth of the white population was \$667.97." More important, the relative wealth of the Kansas City African American community outpaced that of African American communities in other areas. Wilson argues that "the Kansas City Negro, however, was worth \$28.01 more than the average Negro in the United States, while Kansas City whites were worth \$322.04 less than the average per capita wealth of white population nationally."<sup>16</sup> Kansas City, therefore, possessed a growing African American community and an African American population with money to spend. This combination represented a perfect

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<sup>15</sup> "Statistics of Population, Occupations, and Agriculture," State of Kansas Census Compendium, K 312 un. 3 (1950) Kansas State Historical Society, Topeka, Kansas. By 1950, the Kansas City metro area approached 20% African American residents.

<sup>16</sup> Noel Wilson, 10-11.

market for the success of an entrepreneur such as Franklin whose publication provided news, culture, and entertainment to its readers.

As a result of Franklin's dedication, and of the demographic factors working in his favor, circulation of the *Kansas City Call* quickly expanded.<sup>17</sup> Slavens notes that "during its first eight years, *The Call* grew steadily from a circulation of about 2,000 in 1919 to 16,737 in 1927, and then remained at that level until the late 1930s."<sup>18</sup> As the city's economic conditions improved, so did readership. The *Kansas City Call* saw further growth within subscription numbers during the postwar years and by 1946 boasted 35,993 readers. By 1950, the number of subscribers had increased to 40,231.<sup>19</sup> The expanding circulation of Franklin's newspaper never reached the level of Haldeman-Julius's Little Blue Books, but it compared favorably to distribution of Haldeman-Julius's periodical publications and to the local readership of the *Emporia Gazette*. Moreover, the geographic closeness of Franklin's audience gave his publication an ability to focus on a wide variety of subjects, which the entirety of his audience found useful. Thus, his local influence surpassed that of Haldeman-Julius and more closely resembled that of Lindsay White.

### Editorial Perspective

The pages of the *Kansas City Call* gave Franklin a direct link to his audience and allowed him to spread his personal views throughout the Kansas City community.<sup>20</sup> Franklin sought to

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<sup>17</sup> Patrick S. Washburn, *The African American Newspaper* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2006) 123. Washburn explains how the rise of *The Kansas City Call* also followed a broader trend within publishing which saw the emergence of African American newspapers across the nation. He links the content of the white press to the success of African American owned papers because by basically ignoring blacks except when they appeared in a negative light, the white press unwittingly strengthened black papers by encouraging blacks to read them if they wanted news about themselves."

<sup>18</sup> Slavens, 233.

<sup>19</sup> Noel Wilson, 320.

<sup>20</sup> Slavens, 225. Slavens asserts that the paper "espoused a mild form of Booker T. Washington's doctrine of self-help, suggesting that hard work could solve most of the black's problems" and that "social equality was something blacks had to earn." Also, see: Noel Wilson, 24-25. Wilson argues that Franklin believed wise

unite African Americans not only via news, but also through the establishment of a strong insular local community. As a successful businessman, Franklin believed he had a unique ability to advocate on behalf of Kansas City's African American population.<sup>21</sup> His editorials issued calls to action for Kansas City's enlightened African Americans and connected the capabilities of African American leaders to the state of African Americans throughout the city and throughout the region. In addition, his paper provided the pathway for new arrivals to Kansas City to become fully integrated in the local community. Whereas Haldeman-Julius refused advertisements in his publications, at least for products other than his own, the *Kansas City Call* relied chiefly on published advertisements for revenue. What further set Franklin's publication apart was that the *Kansas City Call* printed advertisements on the front page.<sup>22</sup> This is indicative of Franklin's need for revenue to make the publication a success, but also that he recognized that the consumption of goods and services represented an important unifying factor within the African American community. The advertisements published throughout the paper promoted local beauty parlors, tailors, theatre companies, and other self-improvement services.<sup>23</sup> Franklin believed that a reciprocal relationship existed between his readership and his advertisers. In

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stewardship of profits created the necessary means to achieve success and that "ever-increasing enrichment and influence fell to those who were mightiest in labors for their fellowmen." Wilson further asserts that, "Franklin reflected Frederick Douglas in his moments of wrath and W. E. B. DuBois in his moments of sober reasoning,"

<sup>21</sup> Evidence of Franklin's lobbying efforts on behalf of African Americans in Kansas City can be found in Thomas D. Wilson, "Chester A. Franklin and Harry S. Truman: An African American Conservative and the "Conversation" of the Future President." *Missouri Historical Review*. V. 88 Issue: 1. October 1993. Also, the *Call*, June 21, December 13, 1940.

<sup>22</sup> *Kansas City Call*. January 11, 1924. By 1938 this practice will have subsided and advertisements are moves from front page onto page 2.

<sup>23</sup> Davarian Baldwin, *Chicago's New Negroes: Modernity, the Great Migration, and Black Urban Life*. (University of North Carolina Press, 2007). Ad passim. Baldwin's focus on Chicago differs slightly from Kansas City, but his work provides an excellent analysis of the cultural climate experienced by African American arrivals to the urban north. Particularly useful is his analysis of the role that advertisements and commercial enterprises played in the formation of African American culture in the urban setting.

1924, he told readers “We are grateful by the way in which Call readers are patronizing advertisers. Keep it up friends, and we will show you a better paper!”<sup>24</sup>

In order to establish community, and unity, through his newspaper, Franklin provided his audience multiple ways to contribute to the paper. On January 4, 1924, he urged readers to “help us by calling the office and telling us what is going to happen as well as what has happened.” Franklin also told readers to “send an invitation to every party, wedding, dinner, etc. to the social editor of the Call. That gives us notice of what news to be ready to publish.”<sup>25</sup> Further, letters to the editor were printed in a section titled “The Editor’s Mail Box.” The paper described this section as “for the benefit of our readers who have opinions and are desirous of expressing them. The fact that an article or letter appears here does not mean that we agree with the writer’s views.”<sup>26</sup> This type of community interaction mirrored both the publication of reader letters in Haldeman-Julius’s periodicals and on the editorial page of White’s *Emporia Gazette*. In contrast to Haldeman-Julius, however, who published reader letters that primarily concerned issues of national importance, Franklin and White used their editorial pages to highlight issues central to their local communities.

*Kansas City Call* readers often challenged the editorial tone of the paper and suggested future stories for the paper. Reader O. J. Hill criticized Franklin’s coverage of crime stories and assorted nefarious activities. He addressed his letter “Dear. Mr. Franklin,” and went on to say that “I have great admiration for the way you are conducting the 'Call' generally. But I want to suggest that you stop featuring 'the horrible' in your big headlines.”<sup>27</sup> Though Hill does not mention a story specifically, recent *Call* stories focused on a school principal accused of

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<sup>24</sup> Chester Franklin, “Signs Read ‘Straight Ahead,’” *Kansas City Call*. January 4, 1924.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> “Editorial Page,” *Kansas City Call*. January 25, 1924. 10.

<sup>27</sup> O. J. Hill, letter to the editor, *The Kansas City Call*. January 25, 1924.

improper contact with students, various crimes in and around Kansas City, as well as political corruption.<sup>28</sup> Hill also explained that “the Negroes have suffered more than any other race by this cheap, yellow class of journalism. As a leader of your paper you ought to frown on any thing that is going to stir the vicious and evil passions.” In place of sensationalism, Hill urged Franklin to “headline the GOOD and BIG things our colored folks are doing? Why not show how fine people can be misled of how low and mean? It would certainly be better for you and the world.”<sup>29</sup> A letter from Willa Monroe echoed Hill’s sentiments and told Franklin that she chose his paper over the *Chicago Defender* because “I am interested in the progress of our race,” but hoped he would focus less on crime and more on positive stories. She explained that “my friends agree with me in this suggestion for you the improvement of our foremost paper. I do not doubt that those most advantaged in our race will agree with me on this suggestion. Are not they the bulk of the public which you cater to?”<sup>30</sup>

In response to the letters of Hill and Monroe, and others like them, Franklin clarified the purpose of the newspaper and his own editorial standards. In fact, Franklin’s “The Press is to Safeguard the People” appeared in the same issue as Hill and Monroe’s letters. Franklin argued that he had set a high standard for his newspaper and he wanted it kept free of gossip and tabloid sensationalism. He maintained that while he tried to emphasize the achievements and worthwhile happenings among the African-American community, he had to present accurate information regarding crimes and scandals.<sup>31</sup> He used the contemporary controversies surrounding two prominent individuals, presidential candidate William McAdoo and Coca Cola entrepreneur Asa

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<sup>28</sup> For example, see the January 11, January 18, or February 1<sup>st</sup> 1924 editions. See Coulter, 111. Also see Thomas Wilson, 17. Both men argue that Ada Crogman served as a mollifying influence on Franklin’s tendency towards sensationalism.

<sup>29</sup> Willa Monroe, letter to the editor, *The Kansas City Call*. January 25, 1924.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> “History of the Kansas City Call,” Chester A. Franklin Papers, Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri.

Candler, to illustrate the need for objective coverage. Franklin explained that "the press is to publish, not suppress news. . . Whether Mr. McAdoo is in fault in the oil scandal, or the wife of Mr. Candler in her sordid atmosphere, newspapers do not say. But they publish the news and let the public draw its own conclusion."<sup>32</sup> Franklin further asserted that through his paper's coverage of similar events, "Kansas City may see what is the proper intention of THE CALL. It is inevitable that news will 'break' that we regret just as much as do the friends of the unfortunate."<sup>33</sup> Franklin's perspective reflected his belief that the African American press simultaneously served as a unifying moral compass for the African American community and as a positive representation for the group to the larger white Kansas City audience.

Franklin carefully delineated differing coverage standards depending upon a story's focus. He told readers that "we shall shield youth and innocence. Women are not our target, and in their misfortune, we will omit their names unless they are old offenders." However, he put those who threatened Kansas City's peace and prosperity and gave the community a bad reputation firmly in his sights and warned that "on the other hand, the ruthless thieving hands who have made public service a private graft will be exposed whenever and wherever, no matter what influences try to shield them."<sup>34</sup> Beyond clarifying the editorial purpose of the *Kansas City Call*, Franklin also connected the desires of his audience for information, and their right to know unvarnished facts, to the content he provided in the *Kansas City Call*. He justified his coverage of negative events succinctly: "because it is news." Franklin explained that "by some quirk of human nature men are always more eager to hear what is evil than what is good." Thus, "a compliment gets little acceptance, even being discounted by the recipient, but condemnation,

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<sup>32</sup> Chester Franklin, "The Press is to Safeguard the People," *The Kansas City Call*, February 10, 1924.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Chester Franklin, "News Service Reflects the Opinions of the People," *The Kansas City Call*, February 15, 1924.

gossip, slander, are in everybody's mouth in an instant." Even though Franklin admitted that "we wish it not so. We do nothing to make it so, but it is so. And so newspapers . . . feature crime stories, way out of proportion of the number of people whose interests are affected, and the worth of their cause."<sup>35</sup>

Despite Franklin's strenuous defense of all news stories, coverage in the *Kansas City Call* proved typical of most African American-owned presses and did not disproportionately dwell on negative, scandalous, or salacious stories in order to sell copy.<sup>36</sup> Franklin's advocacy of issues and social change depended on his ability to establish the credibility of the paper within Kansas City and maintain a neutral editorial perspective. Too much sensationalism might easily have resulted in the *Kansas City Call* alienating its African American audience. Yet, repeated polemical calls for radical overthrow of the status quo insured attracting opposition from white Kansas Citians. His paper carefully charted a middle course between the controversial rabble rousing found in Haldeman-Julius's weekly papers and the conservative writing of William Lindsay White.

Franklin's attitude toward newspaper content indicates he believed his paper had a dual responsibility, to the African American residents of Kansas City and to the Kansas City community as a whole. On one hand, his publication provided weekly demonstrations of how African Americans were succeeding and working within the political system to achieve equality. On the other hand, he drew a connection between the prosperity of the city's African Americans and the strength of Kansas City as a whole. Thus, Franklin's strategy for creating community and winning equality depended on proving that African Americans were important members of the

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<sup>35</sup> Chester Franklin, "News Service Reflects the Opinions of the People," *The Kansas City Call*, February 15, 1924.

<sup>36</sup> Noel Wilson, 19, 52, and 53. Wilson's work includes tables breaking down early *Kansas City Call* coverage of issues; specifically the type of advertisers and balance between news and entertainment stories.

city. Unlike Haldeman-Julius, Franklin inextricably connected his publication to a local geographic community and worked to create ideological unity among his audience.

### **Focusing on the African American Community**

The *Kansas City Call* served as a mouthpiece through which Franklin articulated his desire for full societal inclusion of African Americans in America. Printed at the top of the editorial page, the paper's platform proclaimed; "The Call believes that America can best lead the world away from racial and national antagonisms when it accords to every man, regardless of race, color or creed his human and legal rights." Additionally, it stated that "hating no man, fearing no man, The Call strives to help every man in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back."<sup>37</sup> The paper's editorial perspective, as well as its conservative views regarding racial uplift, stemmed from Franklin's desire to provide African Americans the tools for financial and economic success while portraying them as capable, competent, and equal.

Through coverage of local and national news, the *Kansas City Call* advocated a strengthening of the African American community within Kansas City and championed the role African Americans could play in improving the nation. On March 10, 1924, Franklin spoke out against rising crime rates in an editorial titled, "A Murder a Week." He wrote, "Kansas City is making a blood record. A killing a week among Negroes is outside all reason and must be stopped. Liquor, larceny and love are leading to cutting and shooting affairs that frequently end fatally."<sup>38</sup> Franklin lamented the impact of such crime on the community, writing "It is no apology to say that a lot of worthless people are the ones killed." He added, "We, who are only one-tenth the population, are having a murder a week . . . the community is sinking lower in all

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<sup>37</sup> "The Call's Platform," *The Kansas City Call*, July 22, 1949.

<sup>38</sup> Chester Franklin, "A Murder a Week," *The Kansas City Call*, March 7, 1924.



its classes, under the deadly poison of lawlessness and inhumanity. We cannot afford it, we must not permit it.”<sup>39</sup> Franklin believed that as long as African Americans wallowed in crime, they not only sabotaged their desire for prosperity and undermined their efforts for inclusion in the larger Kansas City community.

In the eyes of Franklin, African American residents of Kansas City not only needed to disavow violence, they also needed to take a more active role in community planning. In the February 10, 1934 edition, he spoke out against the location of a garbage dump within an African American neighborhood and proclaimed the need for opposition and solidarity among African American leaders. "THE CALL wishes it could inspire the Vine Street Improvement Association with a sense of its responsibility for the whole of our people. It should be as active for our group as the Chamber of Commerce is for white people." Beyond wishing for an active organization of African American leaders, Franklin cited successes won by white businesses as a model of protest: "The daily press told just a few days ago how the white people of the 16th ward, preachers, business men, bankers, and housekeepers, organized to prevent hog pens from being located even down in the river bottom in their section." Similar results had not been achieved by protests and complaints previously voiced by Franklin, and he reminded readers that "THE CALL has repeatedly called for action." He added that "we have suffered their swill depot to remain among us nearly a year with not even one committee clamoring for fair play." The growing frustration Franklin felt led him to put his call to action not in terms of racial identity and solidarity but as a question of equality. Whereas Kansas City's white residents had an established organization working to advance the interests of their community, Franklin hoped to inspire a similar effort on the part of Kansas City's African American residents. He argued that "the condition shames us so greatly that if our organization already perfected will not act, the rest

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<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

of us, in whatever manner we can, should take up the cause, and fight until we win.” After all, he wrote, “We too are Kansas City people, joint heirs of its never say die spirit. Let's acquit ourselves as men.”<sup>40</sup> Franklin urged African American residents of Kansas City to take pride in themselves and in their community. Through a sense of ownership and responsibility African American Kansas Citians could demonstrate they were worthy of equality.

Beyond supporting particular candidates and opposing specific policies, Franklin used the pages of the *Kansas City Call* to stress the importance of African Americans civic and economic participation. Under the headline “Call’s School for Voters,” the March 18, 1938 *Kansas City Call* detailed the voting process for its readers. One-third of a page explained that “voting is a simple matter of making 8 crosses like this (X) in 8 squares. Do not let all this talk make you believe that it will be hard to mark your ballot in the city election.” Further, it described the importance of marking a vote for all offices and delineated which candidates were seeking which offices. It closed with a reminder that “every voter is given enough time to mark his ballot” and that “a mistake on a ballot is not a crime, but it will make your ballot no good.”<sup>41</sup>

In order to enact change on a national level, Franklin directed his readers to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored Peoples (NAACP) and connected the strength of local branches to national achievement. Repeatedly, he urged his readers to make monetary contributions to NAACP and to aid the fight against oppression. In the wake of the Supreme Court decision in 1938 that allowed Lloyd Gaines to enroll in the University of Missouri Law school, Franklin argued that “those who by contributing to the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People have a part in this glorious victory will down in history. . . but

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<sup>40</sup> Chester Franklin, “Let the Vine St. Improvement Association Act,” *The Kansas City Call*. February 15, 1924. The daily press Franklin refers to is the *Kansas City Star* and *Kansas City Times*, the dominant white newspapers in Kansas City. Also see Coulter, 87. Coulter discusses a variety of Franklin’s civic efforts including a campaign to save the Perry Hospital in 1913, 96.

<sup>41</sup> Chester Franklin, “Call’s School for Voters,” *The Kansas City Call*, March 18, 1938.

they by themselves are not enough.” Since all African Americans could benefit from this historic victory, Franklin reminded “the rest of the group who share the benefits gained . . . [that] rights for all should be the work of all.”<sup>42</sup>

The most important issue facing the African American community during the mid-twentieth-century was how to best agitate and advocate for societal inclusion. Through the pages of his newspaper, Franklin told his readers that they must prove themselves worthy of the equality they sought. He championed the cause of equality by emphasizing positive values such as hard work, industriousness, self-reliance, and morality. In many ways, Franklin’s advocacy of equality via positive examples anticipated the strategy William Lindsay White employed in his writing during subsequent decades.<sup>43</sup> Moreover, Franklin’s racial uplift within the public sphere indicates that while he enjoyed great latitude in editorial content, he remained cognizant of the larger local community and crafted his message carefully in order to maximize the appeal of his publication.

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<sup>42</sup> Chester Franklin, “Ours When We Pay for It.” *Kansas City Call*. December 23, 1938. Beyond his support of the NAACP, the push for educational equality had been a long time struggle for Franklin, and one on which he agreed with both Haldeman-Julius and William Lindsay White. See “Keep Asking for Equality” and “Federal Aid for Education,” *The Kansas City Call*, May 4, 1938. Franklin’s editorial also foreshadows the involvement of his paper in the Lloyd Gaines case. For general information on the Gaines case, see: Robert M. Sawyer, “The Gaines Case: Its Background and Influence on the University of Missouri and Lincoln University, 1936-1950” (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Missouri, Columbia, 1966). Also, see: Daniel T. Kelleher, “The Case of Lloyd Lionel Gaines: The Demise of the Separate but Equal Doctrine,” *The Journal of Negro History*, 56, no. 4 (Oct., 1971), 262-271, Larry Grothaus, “‘The Inevitable Mr. Gaines’: The Long Struggle to Desegregate the University of Missouri 1936-1950,” *Arizona and the West*, 26, no. 1 (Spring, 1984), 21-42, and Lucile H. Bluford, “The Lloyd Gaines Story, Southern Higher Education Since the Gaines Decision: A Twenty Year Review,” *Journal of Educational Sociology*, 32, no. 6, (Feb., 1959), 242-246. For specific *Kansas City Call* coverage of the Lloyd Gaines case see: page 3 of this issue which contains a profile of Gaines, an article focused on Walter White’s call for monetary support of NAACP efforts for education equality, and coverage of upcoming NAACP agenda. Also, see “Missouri Students Denied Tuition Aid Are Urged to Send Letters to N.A.A.C.P. to Help Gaines Case.” *Kansas City Call*. December 23, 1938. 22. The December 1938 issue also contained reaction from N.A.A.C.P. lawyers.

<sup>43</sup> This will be apparent in Chapter three when I consider three articles White wrote in 1942 focused on African American military involvement and also in Chapter five when I discuss White’s *Lost Boundaries* and subsequent correspondence with African American readers.

## The importance of Self-Reliance

Chester Franklin did not personally pursue political office as a pathway to societal change, but he used the pages of the *Kansas City Call* to support local candidates and policies that favored self-reliance. In the March 21, 1924, issue Franklin explained to his readers the importance of local government and the need for effective leadership. He argued that “the people should have the best and cheapest government obtainable and that is assured by the republican platform.” Additionally, he observed divergent priorities between public workers and private enterprise. He argued that:

It is the habit of Americans to give no heed to taxes, expect when the payment is being made. They see government employees multiply until every twelfth man lives on his fellows. They see contractors grow fat. They pay ever increasing taxes or rent, and yet do not take the one and only way out of their troubles, which is to put into public office such men as will administer it as though it were private job. We have fostered a second set of morals which are used in public affairs, even by the same men who deal fairly in private life.<sup>44</sup>

Franklin not only railed against the excesses of municipal government but expressed an essentially conservative view that the leanest and most efficient government served his people and the city best. He told his readers a month later that “because we believe that the administration of Mayor Cromwell has failed either to serve the city in general, or our group in particular, as well as it should have, we favor a change.”<sup>45</sup>

On the local level, Franklin championed the election of African American candidates. In January 1924, his editorial titled “Sentiment Grows for a Negro Alderman” stated the need for “a candidate who is loyal to the best interests of both the city and his race.” According to Franklin, the election of an African American candidate would increase unity and identity within the community. He argued, “Where white people have a race solidarity that makes the one

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<sup>44</sup> Chester Franklin, “The Way to Better City Government.” *Kansas City Call*. March 21, 1924.

<sup>45</sup> Chester Franklin, “Republican City Ticket Deserves to Win.” *Kansas City Call*. April 1, 1924.

nationality sympathetic with another, it is the fashion in America to enforce the most thorough-going segregation from Negroes that conditions will permit.” As a result, “the interests of our part of the citizenship are not understood and are ignored.” Franklin believed that “a Negro in office is a guarantee that at best they [African American interests] will be known. It is fair. It is for the best interest of all.”<sup>46</sup>

The following month he explained the particularly troublesome political situation to Ada Crogman. He told her that “We have a city campaign coming on here which divides the city into the usual political camps, but has an additional division, born of disagreement over the wisdom of nominating a Negro alderman in a Negro ward.” Due to the ongoing political machinations, Franklin lamented that local candidates were not paying much attention to the African American voter. He asserted that “negroes are generally neglected this year. The republican faction that is in control is doubtful of our loyalty to them. The democrats are not yet counting us as an element of their strength, and the other republicans who lost, were not interested in getting out the vote.” Within the turmoil, Franklin reminded Crogman that his responsibility “as a publisher, which is another way of saying as an attorney for the people,” was to advocate the perspective of his readers.<sup>47</sup> Despite the spirited support of Franklin, and the local African American community, the favored candidate for alderman was defeated.<sup>48</sup> The defeat of an African American candidate in 1922, and again in 1924, did not deter Franklin, however. He remained committed to the recruitment of African American candidates for local office and to efforts designed to increase voter turnout among Kansas City’s African American community.

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<sup>46</sup> Chester Franklin, “Sentiment Grows for Negro Alderman.” *Kansas City Call*. January 8, 1924. 10. See Coulter, 155 – 160.

<sup>47</sup> Chester Franklin to Ada Crogman, 19 March 1922. Chester E. Franklin Collection, Black Archives of Mid-America.

<sup>48</sup> Slavens, 230.

Franklin championed the contributions of local African Americans to the business community of Kansas City and optimistically looked forward to further involvement. He stated that “business is the next step after skilled labor. The Negro in America has his diploma as a common laborer, and has made enviable progress as a skilled craftsman. Business is next.” Franklin believed that the future promised increased involvement for African Americans and that the unique position of Kansas City provided distinct advantages for them. He argued that within the local community “the race has long had a goodly number of worthwhile businesses. We have had business organizations, we have entertained the National Business League, we have a population living in groups, we have an alert press, we have the protection of courts and the laws.”<sup>49</sup> Franklin’s involvement with the Negro Business League and other groups indicated a civic commitment to both racial equality and economic opportunity. In addition, his dedication to the local community underscores the close connection between his paper and the African American population in Kansas City. He had founded a business in Kansas City, thus connecting his own success to the financial well-being of the African American community. He made this connection and commitment to the local community clear in 1924 when he told readers that “this struggle to get ahead, and sacrifice to accumulate capital with which to buy machinery for the production of a real race newspaper is all to the benefit of Negro labor. Race men and women get regular wages from your [his readers] patronage of us.”<sup>50</sup>

Franklin’s political advocacy emphasized economic policies that depended on personal responsibility and individual autonomy. The Great Depression ushered in a period of economic decline that hit African American communities and laborers especially hard. Declining production in American factories, coupled with the limited inroads by African Americans in the

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<sup>49</sup> Chester Franklin, “There is Work for the Negro Business League,” *The Kansas City Call*, February 1, 1924.

<sup>50</sup> Chester Franklin, “Signs Read Straight Ahead,” *The Kansas City Call*, Jan 4, 1924. 1.

major labor unions, meant that African American workers suffered greater levels of unemployment and poverty than their white counterparts. Franklin, however, resisted the move towards collectivism and reliance on a centralized authority, either the government or labor, to ensure prosperity. He argued in 1938 that efforts to regulate the economy, specifically to ensure adequate wages for workers, went against the fundamental relationship between profits and wages. He stressed that “somewhere between the old system where capital was sacred and this new deal when the forgotten man is the one most remembered lies the safe course. . . . Until it is found prosperity will continue to be driven away by the strife between them.” Further, he believed that negotiations between labor unions and governmental officials undercut the ability of market forces to regulate the American economy. Franklin asserted economic tampering negatively impacted society because labor and government “has yet taken the trouble to put himself in the other fellow’s place. But the public, – by which is meant all people not concerned in a particular controversy – has begun to see demands are not always just, even though presented fervently.”<sup>51</sup>

Franklin used the *Kansas City Call* as a platform to argue that African Americans were better served by adopting the traits of respectable white society than by accepting government handouts. In a chapter titled “Franklin’s New Basis for Republicanism,” Thomas Wilson argues that Franklin believed equality was best won through hard work, self-reliance, and ethical behavior. Franklin viewed New Deal policies skeptically because “aid programs would sap the will of poor African Americans by allowing them to make a living from government sponsored work programs – a living that would be, in the eyes of Franklin, illusory.”<sup>52</sup> Even though he

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<sup>51</sup> Chester Franklin, “Wages and Profits,” *The Kansas City Call*, February 4, 1938. Also, see: Thomas Wilson, ad passim. The consistent support Franklin gave Republican politicians, and his support for the values of self-reliance and business, represents the primary thrust of Wilson’s work.

<sup>52</sup> Thomas Wilson, 49.

acknowledged that “the American people accept the view that social security is the public’s responsibility and insecurity is no longer the individual’s bad luck,” Franklin continued to criticize the federal government’s policies because of their negative impact on average workers, arguing that plans that taxed businesses in order to fund social security programs risked the overall prosperity of the country. Franklin asserted that:

It is no wonder that the number of the unemployed stays high. Industry is hard pressed to survive the depression. Business from the largest to the smallest has its hands full. When to that is added a direct tax on resources, it is simply a matter of time when the guarantee against tomorrow’s old age and unemployment will have taken away the wages for today’s job.<sup>53</sup>

In addition, Franklin believed that governmental taxation was designed to drive a wedge between labor and business interests, which he believed were both vitally important for American prosperity. This opposition to New Deal economics confirms Franklin’s conservative political reputation. Yet, it says more about his personal values than his political affiliation. Franklin connected African American equality and American prosperity with the ability of individuals to pursue economic opportunity and personal success. Governmental interference, in his view, impeded this process. He told readers that “in politics it is American practice to array workers against employers. But sober thinking warns against taking that political stratagem for the real facts.” Instead, he argued that “the worker and the employer are the two sides of the producer. One rises or falls along with the other. If pay roll taxes confiscate capital, the worker now employed will have to join the unemployed along with the employer along with him.”<sup>54</sup>

Franklin’s conservative political vision shone through in a 1940 editorial entitled “Change in Negro Politics.” In response to what he termed “the old stratagems used when the Negro was the issue in American politics,” Franklin delineated the important political issues and

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<sup>53</sup> Chester Franklin, “Stop Penalizing Employment.” *Kansas City Call*. November 11, 1938. 10. Thomas Wilson.

<sup>54</sup> “Ibid.



the farcical political machinations often employed by politicians. He argued that “race and color have nothing to do with fair taxation, competent administration and constructive statecraft. Yet for a generation the Negro’s place in American life was fought over to the neglect of the essentials of government.”<sup>55</sup> Despite the progress he believed African Americans had made, Franklin asserted that “reckless of their country’s welfare, and indifferent to their race’s progress, Negro politicians who have spent their lives in organizing state political organizations in the back room of barber shops are again trying the old game.”<sup>56</sup> He became even more scathing when he added, “Just as the Klan would ride again, the lily whites and the old time southern Negro politicians who have been happy to glean in the politician field behind their reaping, are busy trying to name the Republican nominee.”<sup>57</sup> Franklin closed his editorial by urging his readers to see through political tricks and avoid falling victim to smooth talking. He warned politicians that “Negro voters who carried them to prominence in the past as a horse bears its rider, are demanding substantial returns for their support now.” This statement clearly indicates that while Franklin connected racial identity and solidarity to political success, he remained skeptical of an unquestioning attitude within the political realm. He valued racial solidarity less than he valued individual autonomy. On January 5, 1940, Franklin returned to this subject in “Ready for Responsibility” and argued that “a more intelligent Negro voter will not be a hewer of wood and a drawer of water for anybody, black or white.”<sup>58</sup>

Franklin’s conservative economic views differed greatly from Haldeman-Julius’s sympathy towards labor and penchant for socialism. In fact, Franklin had more in common with the open-minded, but ultimately conservative, approach toward economics of William Lindsay

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<sup>55</sup> Chester Franklin, “Change in Negro Politics.” *Kansas City Call*. January 12, 1940.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>58</sup> Chester Franklin, “Ready for Responsibility” *Kansas City Call*. January 5, 1940.

White. Both Franklin and White emphasized the individual and believed that American prosperity depended on market conditions operating free from governmental interference.

### **Expansion and Community Focus**

Like any good businessman, Franklin knew the key to longevity and success was maintenance of current customers and a slow and steady expansion into new markets. Five years after publishing the first issue of the *Kansas City Call*, he purchased a new printing press, which facilitated expansion of the operation. On February 1, 1924 – the first edition printed with the new machine - Franklin reported that “the installation of the Duplex press in THE CALL means that the paper takes the place as the third largest modernly equipped Negro newspaper plant, devoted exclusively to newspaper publishing in America.”<sup>59</sup> The investment in new technology allowed increased efficiency and also gave Franklin the ability to look toward expanding his operation beyond the Kansas City community.

A decade later, Franklin again expanded the reach and influence of his publishing ventures by introducing the *St. Louis Call* and also billing the *Kansas City Call* as “The Call Southwest's Leading Weekly.” Franklin also began offering separate editions titled “Tulsa Edition,” “City Edition,” and “Southwest Edition,” all originating in Kansas City printing facilities and offering similar articles and information with slight variation. For example, each edition featured a section titled “Woman’s Page”; in the “Southwest Edition” it compromised pages four and five, in the “City Edition” it took up pages four through six, and in the “Tulsa Edition” it appeared on page four. In terms of price, the “Southwest Edition” cost ten cents, the

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<sup>59</sup> Chester Franklin, “Modern Duplex Web Press in Call Building,” *Kansas City Call*. February 1, 1924. The expansion of the printing operation in Kansas City mirrored the expansion of the *Emporia Gazette* undertaken by William Allen White and by Emanuel Haldeman-Julius shortly after each operation started. Thus, the *Kansas City Call* followed a common business model by starting small and gradually obtaining increased equipment and distribution capabilities as the subscription base grew.

“City Edition” five cents in greater Kansas City and ten cents elsewhere, and the “Tulsa Edition” cost five cents. While many of the stories were consistent, local editions of the *Kansas City Call* Franklin allowed local readers to submit events and stories for publication. This feature served a dual purpose for Franklin: it greatly reduced the number of reporters needed and the manpower required to adequately cover events in communities ranging from Kansas City to points in Oklahoma and beyond, and perhaps more important, it allowed readers a sense of ownership and control over the paper’s content.

Each edition carried the protocol for readers to submit stories. The advertisement from the January 5, 1934, “Tulsa” edition is representative: “Agents, Correspondents, Mail Your Home Town News Every Sunday Night. To make publication in the current week's issue. The mail edition of the Kansas City Call goes to press Wednesday noon.”<sup>60</sup> Readers-submitted stories appeared in a section specific to their location. For example, the “Southwest Edition” contained a section titled “News from Missouri Towns” on pages six through ten. Beyond Missouri events, this section interspersed news from Kansas communities and other areas like Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas. While the “Southwest Edition” clearly aimed for the broadest audience possible, the “City Edition” also sought a market beyond Kansas City, Missouri, and included a “Kansas Side News” section generally located on page nine which included noteworthy events from local Kansas communities.

The stories within these sections did not, however, constitute the bulk of the paper’s news content. Instead, they allowed readers a forum through which they could announce social gatherings, civic organization meetings, personal events such as marriages and births, and other news. For example, on the “News from Missouri” page on January 26, 1940 appeared stories from Lexington, Missouri, included a list of individuals currently sick, a notation about

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<sup>60</sup> *The Kansas City Call*. January 5, 1934.

diminished school attendance due to cold weather, and a list of individuals who had attended “a tea [hosted] during New Year’s Day at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Lewis.”<sup>61</sup> The “News from Kansas” page included a column focused on news from Parsons, Kansas, written by Mrs. W. S. Davis who lived at 229 Corning. Mrs. Davis reported on various church groups, individuals who had fallen ill or been admitted to the hospital, and upcoming local sporting events. The column also noted that at the meeting of the Jewel Art club “a book report was given by Mrs. Leola Preston. [And] remarks were given by the following out of town guests; Mrs. Belle White, Mrs. Ruth Pruitt, Mrs. Esther Wyatt, and Mrs. Goldie Collins all of Independence.”<sup>62</sup> These events did not constitute news or hold importance for anyone beyond a small group, but they demonstrated Franklin’s commitment to creating community, and unity, among his African American readers. Through weekly publicity of community events, and with the contact information of the reporters who compiled the reports, individuals who moved into the *Kansas City Call* area could reach out to those around them and quickly acclimate themselves. Finally, the fact that reports came from urban centers and small communities, and particularly that they came from locations without sizable African American populations, indicates that Franklin’s paper effectively communicated with readers outside Kansas City and provided them a sense of belonging in the regional African American community.

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<sup>61</sup> “News from Missouri Towns.” Lexington, Missouri. *Kansas City Call*. January 5, 1940. 6. The column on Lexington, Missouri does not list an author or contact information. Other towns included on this page are: Marshall, Mayview, Maryville, Harrisonville, Clinton, Hannibal, Blackburn, Sedalia, Moberly, Arrow Rock, Blackwater, Liberty, St. Joseph, Jefferson City, Fulton, Shelbyville, Platte City, Butler, and Bevier.

<sup>62</sup> “News from Kansas Towns.” Parsons, KS. *Kansas City Call*. January 5, 1940. 18. Other towns included on this page are Wichita, Hoisington, Emporia, Arkansas City, Nicodemus, Herington, St. John, Hutchinson, Independence, Pittsburg, Troy, Anthony, Hugoton, Highland and Sparks, Manhattan, Paola, Oakley, Humboldt, and Topeka. Page 19 in this issue also focused on Kansas towns and included Leavenworth, Chetopa, Ottawa, Iola, Garden City, Salina, Atchison, Fairview, Dodge City, Elwood, Sterling, Lawrence, Osawatomie, Wellington, Winfield, Hiawatha, Eudora, Hill City, Baxter Springs, Elsworth, and Abilene. The majority include authors and addresses, but some are just a list of events and notes from these towns.

Educational organizations, and the contributions they made to the local community also received frequent coverage. In January 1939, the paper ran a retrospective of the past year and noted alongside a story on continued segregation of Missouri's medical community that "Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority chapter at Lincoln University, instead of holding its annual spring party, gave \$145 in party fees to hungry, needy sharecroppers."<sup>63</sup> Similarly, the front page of January 5, 1940, issue included stories focused on the upcoming meetings of the Kappa Alpha fraternity, the Alpha Kappa Alpha sorority, and the Alpha Phi Alpha sorority.<sup>64</sup> The article touted the benefit to the Kansas City community of the upcoming meetings and trumpeted the tireless commitment to racial equality in education and civic commitment of each organization. Additionally, Greek organizations often appeared within the specialty sections of the paper as well. For example, on the "Women's Page" of the January 26, 1940 issue, brief articles focused on the foundation of a Delta Sigma Theta chapter at Wichita State University, installation of officers, and the celebration of Delta Sigma Theta founder's day by a chapter in Lawrence, Washington.<sup>65</sup> Extensive coverage of African American Greek organizations provided a two-fold benefit for the *Kansas City Call*. It simultaneously demonstrated that African Americans were capable of making positive contributions to their colleges, and communities, and also reinforced to readers the value of education.

The *Call's* mission to unite community was visible in its coverage of local organizations and events as well as in its focus on the pride and heritage of the African American people. On

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<sup>63</sup> "1939 In Review," *Kansas City Call*. January 5, 1940. 2. Prominent coverage of both fraternity and sorority events indicates a relative lack of gender prejudice within Franklin's editorial perspective. Further indications of gender neutrality can be found in "Ready for Responsibility" *Kansas City Call*. January 5, 1940. 22. Franklin compares the plight of African Americans to American women and asserts that "Like the women, they [African Americans] are ready to put off empty titles and take on responsibility."

<sup>64</sup> "Kappas, Alphas, and A.K.A.'s to Kaysee in 1940," *Kansas City Call*. January 5, 1940. 1.

<sup>65</sup> See, "Wichita Deltas Observe Founding of the Sorority," "Delta Sigma Theta Sorors Install 1940 Officers at the Home of C. Burney," "Zeta Phi Beta Basileus Honored in Washington," and "Founder's Day is Observed by Psi Chapter of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority." *Kansas City Call*. January 12, 1940. 10. The Psi chapter was located in Lawrence, Washington.

January 12, 1940, Franklin described to his readers the need for racial solidarity in the New Year. He wrote, “Negroes in the United States who are quick to sympathize with other distressed peoples are not doing their best for each other. The damnable jealousies and divisions by which the master kept slavery functioning persist.”<sup>66</sup> The only cure for this, Franklin reasoned, was the unification of African American ideology and culture. He explained that “we must first believe in ourselves. The children must learn at their mother’s knee that character and effort, not color and race, are the requirements for success.” Thus, he told readers that in order to help change thinking and build an increased appreciation for the history and achievement of the African American people “the Call suggests as the race’s 1940 New Year’s resolution that each of us do all he can to wipe out slavery’s vicious inheritance of lack of faith in each other. To that end we dedicate the new feature ‘Negro History.’ Watch for it next week.”<sup>67</sup>

Franklin’s strategy to unite the African American community within Kansas City and his creation of a local public sphere platform occupies the middle ground between the strategies used by Emanuel Haldeman-Julius and William Lindsay White. On one hand, Franklin’s efforts to create community through the establishment of a new publication mirrored Haldeman-Julius’s emphasis on community. Franklin’s publication of separate editions for separate markets clearly indicates a desire to expand the reach of the *Kansas City Call*; like Haldeman-Julius, Franklin personally shaped the editorial content of his publications by emphasizing issues he found personally important. Further, Franklin’s paper echoes the efforts of Haldeman-Julius through the prominence of reader-generated content. Soliciting reader contributions provided a cost-effective way of generating local stories and gave readers an outlet to express themselves. It

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<sup>66</sup> Chester Franklin, “One Good Resolution.” *Kansas City Call*. January 12, 1940. 22. January 26, 1940. 22.

<sup>67</sup> Ibid. For example of the ‘Negro History’ feature see, “To Feature Labor During Negro History Week.” January 19, 1940. 3. This article detailed an assortment of sessions and speakers at a gathering in Washington, D.C. and the theme of labor success leading to greater racial equality. The following week appeared another article connected to this theme. See; “Beware of Charlatan Historians, Says Woodson.” January 26, 1940.

undoubtedly also connected the paper to an audience that must have found the majority of Kansas City stories irrelevant to their daily lives.

Franklin's local focus, however, starkly contrasts with Haldeman-Julius's nationwide marketing and much more closely resembles the strategy of the *Emporia Gazette*. Franklin's regional editions did not reflect independent market trends but rather copied almost verbatim his original paper in Kansas City. Franklin boosted the local African American community in Kansas City much the same way that William Lindsay White boosted the city of Emporia. On a larger scale, Franklin's use of his local perspective as an almost universal view of America also mirrored the approach taken by White in subsequent decades. Franklin used the commonalities he saw between his Kansas City roots and other Southwest states to cover national events impacting African Americans and stories of regional importance. For example, in addition to offering editorial support for Lloyd Gaines's effort to desegregate the University of Missouri, and directing his readers to contribute to the NAACP, Franklin urged his own city editor, Lucile Bluford, to challenge a policy that prevented African American enrollment in the Missouri school of journalism. Bluford, a Kansas City native and University of Kansas graduate, had begun working at the *Kansas City Call* in 1933. She enrolled in the University of Missouri's graduate school of journalism in 1939, and was accepted based on her academic credentials, but school officials denied her access when they discovered her racial identity.<sup>68</sup> Bluford, with the support of Franklin, sued the school under violation of "separate but equal" and the recent findings in the Gaines case. She won a legal victory, but the University of Missouri, citing World War II, shuttered its journalism school rather than comply with the court's decision.<sup>69</sup>

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<sup>68</sup> Coulter, 113. Also see Florence Murray, "The Negro and Civil Liberties during World War II," *Social Forces* 24, no. 2 (December 1945) 214.

<sup>69</sup> "Lucile H. Bluford Biography," Mary Beveridge, Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri. Also see Robert Tabscott, "Lucile Bluford Fought to Open Doors," *St. Louis*

Franklin believed that the African American community in Kansas City needed to adopt the values of hard work and self-reliance in order to earn equality. By the time of his retirement in 1950, Franklin had merged the three separate editions of paper back into a larger single edition, once again marketing the *Kansas City Call* as “The Southwest’s Leading Weekly.” His publication continued to include news sections dedicated to both Missouri and Kansas communities and advocate civic virtue and education as the pathway to equality. Franklin’s paper also began to increasingly focus on regional and national events rather than on issues explicitly centered on Kansas City.

### **Commemorating Kansas City**

In 1950, Kansas City celebrated one hundred years of existence. In the same year, following several years of semi-retirement, Chester Franklin stepped away from the *Kansas City Call*. His paper had become the most influential voice within Kansas City’s African American population and a respected publication throughout the Midwest. The reputation of publisher and publication had primarily been established through Franklin’s conservative values and a firm commitment to the local community of Kansas City. Though the African American community actively participated in Centennial events, relatively little coverage of the Centennial Celebration appeared in the *Kansas City Call*. Franklin’s paper remained committed to the local community, but did not use the increased attention on Kansas City brought by the Centennial to challenge local segregation. During the summer of 1950 the paper remained centrally focused on the larger regional and national struggles for African American opportunity and equality.

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*Post-Dispatch*, February 11, 1998. “Lucile Bluford Blazed Trail in Civil Rights,” Associated Press, June 15, 2003. Diane E. Loupe, “Storming and Defending the Color Barrier at the University of Missouri School of Journalism: The Lucile Bluford Case,” Missouri Valley Special Collections. The Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.



## An Enhanced Audience

The celebration of Kansas City's centennial anniversary promoted the history of Kansas City and the strength of the community. Parades, theatre performances, historical reenactments, and social events attracted increased civic attention from local residents and also brought visitors into Kansas City from across the region. For example, the Centennial square dance, held May 11 through 13 drew over 5,000 local dancers per night, and the total attendance for three nights came close to 20,000. Newspaper coverage also chronicled "out-of-town night" on May 13 which featured "the expert teams from other cities and towns, some of them several hundred miles away, [and] proved ample testimony to the fact that Kansas City's Centennial celebration belongs to the whole area."<sup>70</sup> At the Centennial pageant, on June 15, the *Kansas City Times* reported "in the parking lot east of the Starlight Theatre last night, twenty-six motor cars bore license plates from sixteen states other than Kansas and Missouri."<sup>71</sup>

The anniversary of Kansas City's foundation provided civic leaders an opportunity to promote Kansas City as a regional leader. Centennial supporters published a souvenir program that presented an encapsulated view of the spirit running throughout the Centennial celebration and the effort to promote Kansas City's past and present through a mixture of historical information, advertisements, and company profiles.<sup>72</sup> In combination with newspaper coverage and Centennial events, the celebration accentuated the positive aspects of Kansas City and placed the Midwest alongside other desirable American destinations.

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<sup>70</sup> "In a Final Whirl," *Kansas City Star*, May 14, 1950.

<sup>71</sup> "Centennial Fun in Four Locations Tonight," *Kansas City Times*, June 15, 1950.

<sup>72</sup> *Kansas City Centennial Souvenir Program*. Kansas City Centennial Association. Kansas City, MO: 1950. 3. In addition to the souvenir program, members of the Centennial Association compiled a Centennial scrapbook which is housed at the Kansas City Public Library, Missouri Valley Special Collections. The bulk of the collection is newspaper clippings made during the Centennial celebration. See: Kansas City Centennial Association scrapbook (SC51), Missouri Valley Special Collections, Kansas City Public Library, Kansas City, Missouri.

### **The *Kansas City Call* covers the Centennial**

Even though the increased attention brought to Kansas City by the Centennial Celebration could have provided Franklin an opportunity to challenge the continued segregation African Americans faced in Kansas City, coverage of the celebration in the *Kansas City Call* was limited. The lack of articles that focused specifically on the Centennial does not indicate that African Americans boycotted the celebration nor were mere observers to Centennial events. Rather, the scarcity of Centennial coverage demonstrates that by 1950 local issues had been supplanted by a focus on the broader push towards African American equality.

Coverage in the *Kansas City Call* came not through daily articles that publicized or reported the celebration, as it did in the *Kansas City Times* and *Kansas City Star*, but rather through photographic montages of Centennial events. The June 2 edition featured iconic photos of Union Station, Centennial participants, and the paper's news staff celebrating the event. Further, the July 7 issue featured a multi-page photo montage of the Grand Centennial Ball and its fashions, participants in the Square Dance, and parade spectators. In addition, *The Kansas City Call* ran a photo of William Fambrough's victory in the Centennial beard contest, with the caption "Fambrough, THE CALL photographer, grew a beard fashioned after the one worn by Abe Lincoln."<sup>73</sup> African Americans participated as individuals and groups in Centennial events and their experiences were documented in the *Kansas City Call*.

Several factors account for the discrepancy in the amount of coverage, however, among Kansas City's white newspapers, the *Kansas City Times* and *Kansas City Star*, and the *Kansas City Call*. First, the frequency of publication undoubtedly influenced the amount of space devoted to Centennial activities. Whereas the *Kansas City Times* and *Kansas City Star* published daily, the *Kansas City Call* published only once per week. During the entire Centennial

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<sup>73</sup> "Grand Centennial Ball Photos," *Kansas City Call*, July 7, 1950.

celebration, the combined total of *Times* and *Star* issues numbered ninety-eight whereas in the same seven-week period the *Kansas City Call* published only seven issues. In addition, during this period the *Kansas City Call* billed itself as “The Southwest’s Leading Weekly” and actively sought an audience outside of Kansas City. While Centennial activities might have interested the residents and leaders of Kansas City, the celebration had relatively little importance for readers of the *Kansas City Call* in Oklahoma, Texas, or a host of other markets.

Importantly, within the *Kansas City Call*’s coverage no vitriolic protests appeared or gave the impression that the limited coverage resulted from an opposition to the celebration or organized exclusion of African Americans. Franklin, in fact, published an editorial on June 30 commending the organizers of the celebration for their willingness to suspend segregation during the celebration. He asserted that “the Kansas City Centennial committee is to be congratulated for the non-segregation policy which is in effect at events held in connection with Kansas City’s 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary.”<sup>74</sup> As a result of this policy, “no incidents have come to our attention in which Negro spectators have received treatment any different from any other citizen” and “seats have been sold on a first come, first serve basis, both for the ‘Thrills of a Century’ pageant in Swope park and at the numerous events in the Municipal auditorium. There has been no attempt to set aside a ‘certain section’ for Negroes.”<sup>75</sup> The policy received commendation for reasons beyond the easing of restrictions so that African American Kansas Citians could fully attend and enjoy Centennial events. The editorial connected the move to a maturing of Kansas City: “it is appropriate that in its 100<sup>th</sup> birthday year Kansas City grow up and take on big city ways. It is like the coming of age of a man at 21 years. It is time to put away childish habits and customs.” Undoubtedly, “segregation and discrimination based upon race, color, or religion are among the

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<sup>74</sup> Chester Franklin, “Let’s Keep up the Centennial Spirit,” *Kansas City Call*, June 30, 1950. Franklin’s editorial demonstrates his commitment to conservative advocacy and his solidarity with the local community.

<sup>75</sup> Chester Franklin, “Let’s Keep up the Centennial Spirit,” *Kansas City Call*, June 30, 1950.

habits that should be shelved as this great metropolis goes into its second century.” Furthermore, the editorial looked forward to the possibility that “the policy . . . can be continued when the special event is over and the theatre becomes a permanent part of Kansas City’s recreation program.”<sup>76</sup>

The *Kansas City Call* did not mimic the cheerleading done on behalf of the celebration by the dominant white newspapers. Due to the divided nature of Kansas City, reaction to the Centennial celebration was mixed among Kansas City’s African American community. African American residents participated in Centennial events and marched in the parades, and while the *Kansas City Call* praised African American inclusion, it questioned why the unity could not continue. Importantly, the paper did not use the increased publicity to attack city officials or draw negative attention to Kansas City. Unlike Haldeman-Julius, who used his publications to shine light on societal ills and expose the impact of policies with which he disagreed, Franklin believed that the only way to achieve equality for African Americans lay in their ability to embody dominant values. During the Centennial Celebration his paper stayed true to this conservative vision and pursued a path more closely mirroring the technique used by Lindsay White to criticize exclusion via affirmative examples of African American participation. In addition, during the summer of 1950 Franklin largely ignored Centennial events in order to focus on other priorities.

### **Other Priorities**

During Kansas City’s Centennial celebration, Franklin used the pages of the *Kansas City Call* to focus on the African American beyond Kansas City and to campaign for equality on a regional and national level. In terms of content, the *Kansas City Call* has become the first

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<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

African American publication to utilize the major mainstream wire services beginning in 1948 and also joined national publication listings in 1950.<sup>77</sup> Franklin's editorials in the spring and summer of 1950 continued his two-decade trumpeting of the importance of education and the need for equal educational opportunities for African Americans. An editorial titled "Cost of Civic Sins is High," published a month before the Centennial Celebration, argued that "from the moment the American people attempted to maintain a color line, they gave the lie to their democracy and to their Christianity. They need only see where they stand now to realize the high price that a nation pays for its civic sins."<sup>78</sup> Then, at the height of the celebration, as the *Kansas City Call* focused a much greater portion of the paper on the ongoing legal battles over racial equality and African American educational opportunities, the paper continued to emphasize the larger ramifications of America's continued commitment to segregation. Included in the May 18, 1950, issue was a cartoon that depicted Uncle Sam standing atop examples of American shortcomings, such as "barbarism, lynching, D.C. theatre ban against Negroes, poll tax." As the character looked over a fence, he was admonished by a personified, bandaged, globe that told him "why don't you clean that filth in your yard." Below the cartoon, the caption stated that "the world is looking to us for leadership as well as advice."<sup>79</sup>

Despite advances made in other social arenas and in educational equality elsewhere, the University of Missouri continued to deny African Americans admittance. To Franklin, this remained an unacceptable symbol of the state's backwardness. He argued on June 16, 1950, that "like Rip Van Winkle, Missouri has been asleep for years and upon awakening . . . finds the world around her has made progress far beyond her own." In places throughout the *Call's* coverage area, African American students could enroll in state universities and graduate from

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<sup>77</sup> *Kansas City Call*. 1. 1950. The *Kansas City Call* began using the INS wire service in 1948.

<sup>78</sup> Chester Franklin, "Cost of Civic Sins is High," *The Kansas City Call*, April 21, 1950.

<sup>79</sup> "Cartoon," *Kansas City Call*, May 12, 1950.

professional programs. Franklin noted that “sleepy Missouri must have been startled into full wakefulness when it learned that Negroes not only have been attending the University of Oklahoma but that three were graduated at the regular commencement exercises last week.”<sup>80</sup> Importantly, Franklin’s editorial gave credit to students and faculty at the University of Missouri who had spoken in favor of African American admittance in the wake of the 1938 Supreme Court’s finding on behalf of Lloyd Gaines, and to members of the Missouri House of Representatives who had passed legislation allowing African American enrollment.

The major blockage, Franklin argued, lay with “sleepy official Missouri, particularly upon the state senate” who had refused to pass the House bill “and the governor [who] refused to call the senate into action at a time when there was a possibility of reviving the bill.”<sup>81</sup> Franklin couched the issue of African American educational opportunity as an issue of Missouri remaining competitive with the surrounding states. He asserted that “if we don’t take action quickly, Missouri will be an island of segregation surrounded by a sea of democratic states.” Because in recent years “our former allies of Oklahoma, Arkansas and Texas (behind whose skirts we hid to justify our own jim crow practices) have gone over to the side of Illinois, Kansas and Nebraska,” the recalcitrance of Missouri left the state “standing alone in the Middle west clinging to the old tradition of ‘separate and not even equal.’”<sup>82</sup> Thus, at a time when Kansas City was celebrating the unity, and potential, of its local community, Franklin advocated a move toward regional and national societal standards.

Franklin’s focus on the lack of educational opportunities available to African Americans echoed Marcet Haldeman-Julius’s investigation into the segregation of Kansas universities in 1927. Whereas Haldeman-Julius had lambasted Kansas school officials for not fully including

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<sup>80</sup> “Admittance to M.U. Is a ‘Must’” *Kansas City Call*. June 16, 1950..

<sup>81</sup> Ibid.

<sup>82</sup> Chester Franklin, “Admittance to M.U. Is a ‘Must’” *Kansas City Call*. June 16, 1950.

African-Americans enrolled in their schools, Franklin struggled against a more exclusionary system in Missouri that fully denied admission to African Americans. Franklin's focus on the importance of education as a pathway towards equality underscored his commitment to social advancement through self-improvement. He did not argue for special opportunities or increased governmental assistance to ensure African American prosperity. Instead, he expressed complete faith that African Americans could succeed on the strength of their character and intellect if only given the opportunity. On this point, his advocacy mirrors the belief expressed by William Lindsay White explored in Chapter five that education represented the ideal avenue through which individuals could demonstrate their worthiness for full societal membership.

In 1950, Franklin reminded readers that “you don’t win by sitting down waiting for the other fellow to do something.” Increased opportunities had been won on behalf of African Americans throughout the *Call's* coverage area through active work by the NAACP legal defense fund, and the group continued to fight oppression. Franklin warned, however, that more donations were needed and “funds can come only from the people – the people who have and will benefit from these decisions.” No matter the amount given, Franklin told his readers to “send your contributions in today. Your give may help speed the day when segregation will be completely eliminated from this country.”<sup>83</sup>

While it is clear that Kansas City's African American residents participated in the Centennial celebration, the *Kansas City Call* remained most directly focused on other priorities during the summer of 1950. The paper did not devote a significant portion of its content to covering the entertainment and social aspects of the Centennial nor to criticizing elements of the celebration that highlighted Kansas City's current segregation and the city's racist past. This

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<sup>83</sup> Chester Franklin, “Your Contribution Might Help Bring End to Segregation.” *Kansas City Call*. June 23, 1950.

does not indicate a breakdown of the linkage between the *Kansas City Call* and the local community, however, because Franklin's paper had shifted by 1950 from an inward-looking, Kansas City-first publication to a paper that embraced the larger regional, and national, community of African Americans. Specifically, by 1950 the paper focused on advocating educational equality within Missouri and full equality on a national level. Much in the same way William Lindsay White used his Emporia perspective as a touchstone for his focus on national issues, Franklin's editorial approach remained grounded in Kansas City but focused on more important issues than celebrating the past.

### **Chester Franklin's Retirement**

Another celebration, more central to the *Kansas City Call* than any Centennial celebration, took place in the summer of 1950. A front page story in the June 2 issue of the *Kansas City Call* announced a celebration of the life and contributions of Chester A. Franklin: "the dinner, which is open to the public at \$2 a plate, will be given on Mr. Franklin's 70<sup>th</sup> birthday anniversary under sponsorship of THE CALL employees."<sup>84</sup> During the testimonial, which attracted over 300 to the St. Stephen Baptist Church, a wide range of speakers praised Franklin's accomplishments and character. Roy Wilkins, former employee and NAACP leader, "remembered that The Call always attempted to print news about people – all people – and not news restricted to any particular class of people." He also fondly remembered "some of the Call's campaigns in those early days to obtain adequate school facilities for Negro children, to eliminate slum areas and provide decent homes for Negro families, to secure gainful employment for Negro workers."<sup>85</sup> Other speakers lionized the impact that Franklin had had upon the local

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<sup>84</sup> "To Honor Franklin at Testimonial Dinner," *Kansas City Call*, June 1, 1950.

<sup>85</sup> "C. A. Franklin Honored on 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday," *Kansas City Call*, June 16, 1950.



community. Kansas City's Democratic Mayor, William E. Kemp, asserted Franklin "has dedicated his life to the education of the public through the printed word in espousing the cause of humanity. 'He has done a masterful job . . . and I am glad to be here to pay tribute to him'"<sup>86</sup> Further, a host of local ministers and the head of the local N.A.A.C.P. chapter also praised Franklin's community commitment and career achievement.

The tribute to Franklin, held on June 7, 1950, also appeared in an article published in the *Kansas City Times*. It stated that "Chester A. Franklin, publisher of the *Call*, Kansas City Negro newspaper, was honored last night . . . delegations from Denver, Chicago, New York, Wichita and closer Kansas and Missouri cities were present." The article also included the words of praise offered by Alf Landon, former Republican governor of Kansas and presidential candidate "Since I first met Mr. Franklin in 1936, I have had many conversations with him. I found him a man who approaches problems not from a racial but from an American viewpoint . . . I have come to pay tribute to a great and true American."<sup>87</sup> Both the *Kansas City Call* and *Kansas City Times* reported the event in a similar objective fashion. In combination with the diverse collection of individuals who offered praise at the dinner, this demonstrates Franklin's importance and underscores his widespread appeal within the Kansas City community.

## Conclusion

Chester Franklin began the *Kansas City Call* at a time when American culture was undergoing sweeping changes and the African American community in Kansas City was expanding rapidly. The combination of rapid change and an audience united through race provided Franklin a public sphere platform that he used to inculcate in new arrivals the values

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<sup>86</sup> Ibid.

<sup>87</sup> "Feted for His Service," *Kansas City Times*, June 8, 1950.

of hard work, self-reliance, and integrity. Franklin believed that the spread of these values throughout the local African American community would demonstrate the equality of African Americans. His business model began with his Midwestern roots, depended upon the continuation of a close connection to the Kansas City community, and resulted in the expansion of his business beyond Kansas City. Franklin's editorials demonstrated not only his concern for autonomy and equality among African Americans, but also his desire for Kansas City's overall improvement.

As he realized publishing success, he pursued an expanded audience. Rather than marketing his publication nationwide, as Haldeman-Julius had done, and rather than join an established publication as William Lindsay White would do, Franklin used the *Kansas City Call* as a model for publications geared towards audiences throughout the southwest. While he provided readers an opportunity to create unique content for each edition, the various publications remained essentially the *Kansas City Call* under a different masthead. Franklin believed that Kansas City's African American community experienced similar enough issues that African Americans throughout Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma would find his paper appealing. Thus, Franklin's career underscores both the enduring importance of geography and the centrality of identity within the formation of community.

### Chapter 3: William Lindsay White Enters the Public Sphere

In 1942, Harold Ickes, Secretary of the Interior, read the newly released novel *Journey for Margaret*. Ickes enjoyed the novel so much that he felt compelled to write a letter of praise. He addressed the letter, however, not to the book's forty-two-year-old author William Lindsay White, but rather to Lindsay White's father, William Allen White. Ickes wrote, "I took young Bill's book with me on a trip that I made to St. Louis and Chicago last week and read it. I have never seen a better piece of reporting." He told William Allen White that "you and Sally ought to feel proud of your son, to whom you gave such a wonderful start but who shows his ability to go on his own power."<sup>1</sup> Ickes's letter provides an effective introduction to William Lindsay White because in just a few short lines it demonstrates not only White's ability to simultaneously entertain and inform, but also the enduring connection Americans made between him and his father.

#### Community Characteristics

Born in 1900, William Lindsay White grew up in the town of Emporia, Kansas. Typical of many Kansas communities during the early part of twentieth-century, the city relied on a mixed economic base and boasted a growing population. In addition, the city was home to a variety of educational institutions, which set it apart from other Kansas communities.<sup>2</sup> What was truly atypical about Emporia, however, was the reputation William Allen White's wit and

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<sup>1</sup> Harold Ickes to William Allen White, 6 October 1942. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>2</sup> William Frank Zornow, *Kansas: A History of the Jayhawk State* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1957), 310-311. Specifically, the community contained a Normal School and a State College, several good sized banks, the railroad, and a multitude of manufacturing companies. Finally, Zornow reports that Emporia was to reach a population of 15,051 in 1956. For an analysis of how Emporia served as a model of middle-America; also, see Edward Gale Agran, *"Too Good a Town: William Allen White, Community, and the Emerging Rhetoric of Middle America"* (Fayetteville, AR: University of Arkansas Press, 1998). Agran argues that the city provided William Allen White a perspective he used to channel American values into his prose and persona.

wisdom had garnered the city. By the time Lindsay White reached adolescence, his father was known far and wide as the “sage of the plains” and had established himself as the conscience of America. His newspaper stories, full-length books, and sharp criticism of political leaders offered a stable, positive vision and condemned the radical swings within the American political landscape. As Craig Miner explains:

Although he was awkward at speechmaking, White was not only creative and determined but also articulate in print. He wrote nationally known books, and the *Emporia Gazette*, though far from the largest newspaper in the state, was doubtless the most influential. White influenced public opinion and corresponded voluminously with a wide range of Kansas leaders, both advising them and reacting to their ideas.<sup>3</sup>

As a result of his father’s success and reputation, Lindsay White was born into a life of opportunity, high expectations, and local celebrity. His famous father, however, proved a mixed blessing for his son’s career. On one hand, William Allen White provided his son a springboard into the public sphere, allowed him the flexibility of writing about either local or national issues in the *Gazette*, and instilled a connection between Emporia and William Lindsay White that offered an enduring audience. On the other, William Lindsay White forever drew comparisons to his father. Emporians called him “Young Bill” well into his sixties, and he struggled throughout his life to establish an individual writing style and professional reputation.

Though Lindsay White regarded his writing and public sphere activities as central to his identity, he entered the arena at a much different period than either Haldeman-Julius or Franklin, and his career took a far different direction. Lindsay White joined, rather than founded, an established publication, and for the majority of his career sought either the approval of his father

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<sup>3</sup> Craig Miner, *Kansas: The History of the Sunflower State, 1854-2000* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 2002.), 229. Miner goes on to explore the relationship Allen White had with the University of Kansas and political causes such as Prohibition and Populism. 229-233. For analysis of William Allen White’s life and career, see, for example, Walter Johnson, *William Allen White’s America* (New York: Holt, 1947). Also Frank C. Clough, *William Allen White of Emporia* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1970).

or his editors prior to publication. In addition, his connection to Emporia linked him to his hometown in a way that neither Haldeman-Julius nor Franklin were to their home communities.<sup>4</sup>

### **The Importance of Separating Father from Son**

Ickes's reaction to *Journey for Margaret* and his linkage of son and father reveals an association that not only plagued contemporaries of both Whites, but has continued to infect the historical record of William Lindsay White. Historians, unfortunately, give William Lindsay White and his published works short shrift in an effort to illuminate the vast contributions of William Allen White. While William Allen White's influence on his home state of Kansas and on American culture undoubtedly deserves praise, ignoring the equally important work of William Lindsay White remains an unfortunate omission. Historians who ignore Lindsay White, or relegate him to a single line or two, overlook an individual who got his start at his father's paper but parlayed his inheritance into a unique national reputation.<sup>5</sup> Furthermore, texts that purport to place William Lindsay White at the heart of their argument and still emphasize the

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<sup>4</sup> E. Jay Jernigan, *William Lindsay White, 1900-1973: In the Shadow of His Father* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1997). Jernigan's work stands as the only "biography" of William Lindsay White. It focuses on White's journalistic career and his effort to create a legacy separate from that of his father. Jernigan argued that White sought escape from Emporia and the shadow of his father by writing overseas. Following his father's death, Lindsay White only reluctantly returned to Emporia when financial obligation, or familial responsibility, compelled him. Jernigan's work certainly tells an interesting story regarding White's personal identity, but it is a work that lacks broader connections. Jernigan's work makes no attempt to place White among events sweeping the nation during his life, including social and political tumult, or into context with other writers in the region.

<sup>5</sup> For example, within Agran's work William Lindsay White merits only a single mention – when William Allen White tours Kansas "with his son Bill at the wheel" – on page 115. Miner omits William Lindsay White altogether, even though William Allen White, Emporia, and the *Emporia Gazette* appear a combined sixty-one times. I exclude from this inquiry biographies written about William Allen White prior to 1970 because William Lindsay White remained living and thus seemed less appropriate for historical study.

relationship he maintained with his father do a disservice to William Lindsay White's legacy by not evaluating his unique individual intellectual contribution.<sup>6</sup>

William Lindsay White's writing focused on a wide array of political and social issues, including local issues within Emporia and Kansas, political and social crises facing the entire United States, and international events that threatened global peace and prosperity. Because of a desire to establish his own legacy, White pursued an audience for his work outside of Emporia and Kansas. He used his writing to consistently express faith in the strength of America and to advocate self-reliance, personal initiative, and a fervent opposition to communism. Yet, White did not resist change out of ideological rigidity. He articulated open-mindedness to any idea that he thought might strengthen America, especially during the economic upheavals of the 1930s, and he supported measures for racial equality that far exceeded America's existing mores and programs. His career intersected with numerous political and social luminaries, including American presidents, and White believed that his public writings could help shape public discourse and help America maintain greatness. Ultimately, White achieved both critical and popular acclaim for his writing, and his path to prominence illustrates the interconnected nature of local and national publications within twenty-first century America.

## Reporting the News

After attending both the University of Kansas and Harvard, White broke into journalism through his family's ownership of the *Emporia Gazette*.<sup>7</sup> He thought of himself first and foremost as a reporter, but like his father, believed his books, articles, and editorials did more

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<sup>6</sup> Jernigan, 114-119. See also Karen Manners Smith, "Father, Son, and Country on the Eve of War," *Kansas History* 28 (Spring 2005): 30-43. Manners Smith argues the issue of U.S. involvement in World War II led to a disagreement, and ultimate ideological split, between William Allen White and William Lindsay White.

<sup>7</sup> Jernigan, 50-67.

than simply spread the news. During the 1930s, when his name appeared on the masthead as business manager, Lindsay White provided the *Emporia Gazette* with a steady stream of editorials touching upon current political issues and reflecting his developing ideological perspective. In January 1933, “Stay West” appeared in the *Gazette* and cautioned Emporians about giving into the bright lights of the big city. White advised, “Don’t go east, young man. Stay where you are. Let the big neon signs on top of the Broadway building flash and glitter.” The lights of the big city did not represent hope, White argued, as some may have thought, because “they reflect down the lines in front of the Sixth avenue employment agencies, which stretch a block and a half, with policeman standing to keep the jobless in line.”<sup>8</sup> In “Stay West,” White tempered enthusiasm for the perpetual glamour of the big city, where he observed “just as many \$15,000 ermine coats, Rolls-Royces and glittering rocks as ever” with the harsh reality that “if you own such a coat and have lost nine-tenths of your money, you either continue to wear it or else sell it someone else who wears it.” Despite the doldrums of the Depression that gripped the city and provoked White’s cautionary tale, he remained upbeat about the nation’s prospects. He finished his editorial with a positive note that “on the whole people in the east have discovered that our civilization is surprisingly elastic, that businesses and individuals can stand amazing losses and changes and the fabric of our social structure still hold together.” Ultimately, he observed, “we are a good deal tougher and more adaptable than we had realized.”<sup>9</sup>

In addition to writing about the human consequence of the Depression, White penned editorials for the *Gazette* in the 1930s that tackled the weighty political questions facing the country. In a 1934 editorial titled “Down with Speculators,” he defended the American system of capitalism, stating that “by and large our profit system operating through the law of supply and

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<sup>8</sup> William Lindsay White, “Stay West,” *Emporia Gazette*, January 17, 1933.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

demand prevents shortages.”<sup>10</sup> He argued that even though “the various boards of trade are also America’s biggest craps games,” the speculators provided a necessary service for the nation. He elaborated, “The speculator performs just as definite a service to our capitalistic society as the postman, banker, the ditch digger or the farmer.”<sup>11</sup> White believed that speculators, who he acknowledged reaped great profit, assumed the risk in place of the public sector. As a result, when they gambled wrong and lost, the public had been insulated from the risk. During the 1930s, when many in government argued for greater state oversight of speculation and trade, White hypothetically imagined a time when businessmen willing to gamble on the market “won’t annoy us by riding in their fine clothes and shiny cars. The work they now do will all be done by some \$25 a week government clerk as it is in Russia.” Of course, in this scenario, White asserted, “we will have great big dandy bread cards and fine long queues and now and then a swell exciting famine just like they do in Russia.”<sup>12</sup> White’s strong anti-communist stance in the 1930s foreshadowed a harsh Cold War condemnation of the Soviet system and became a hallmark of his political perspective. In addition, it clearly separates his political perspective from that of Haldeman-Julius, who openly endorsed socialism and the changes in Russian government and advocated similar changes in America.

Though White defended the system of capitalism, he acknowledged that the current economic conditions in the country required an open mind. He repeatedly asserted that though he disagreed with many New Deal policies, Americans should give them a chance to work. In September 1934, he penned an editorial, “Socialism or Else,” which took to task the plan put forward by Upton Sinclair, then a candidate for governor of California. Sinclair had called for the use of public funds to operate factories and employ the jobless. White argued that though

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<sup>10</sup> William Lindsay White, “Down with Speculators,” *Emporia Gazette*, August 24, 1934.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.



America had long practiced mild forms of socialism - he specifically mentioned the army and post office - only a fool supported a total abandonment of capitalism. He stated, "Private capitalism ought to be able to provide the American people – all of them – a better living than socialism, eventually, but in the meantime there is no reason why both systems shouldn't operate side by side."<sup>13</sup> After all, White noted, Sinclair's plan represented a better solution to unemployment than paying workers not to work. White hoped that Sinclair's campaign failed, but he urged readers that if Sinclair prevailed, the policies should be given a "fair trial."

In another 1934 editorial, White admitted that a plan to put the unemployed to work in factories represented a workable policy initiative because it "will be a tremendous thing for the self-respect of the unemployed men" and at least "they will then know that they are employed at a self-respecting useful labor, instead of 'made work,' useless jobs created as an excuse to give them a dole." Though he did not delve too deeply into solutions of his own, he suggested that aid to the old, shorter working hours, and government-paid compulsory education for 18-20-year olds might increase the availability of jobs and quality of workers.<sup>14</sup> During the 1930s White's ideological perspective remained somewhat open as he witnessed the country wrestling with the devastation of the Depression. He did not summarily dismiss ideas out of political rigidity, but he remained optimistic in capitalism's ultimate superiority. He revisited the idea of an enhanced system of higher education during the 1950s when he argued higher education represented the pathway to a stronger and more productive America. Based on the tone of his writing, White believed that his perspective could inspire readers to open their closed minds to all reasonable ideas and also buoy their faith in capitalism.

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<sup>13</sup> William Lindsay White, "Socialism or Else," *Emporia Gazette*, September 16, 1934.

<sup>14</sup> William Lindsay White, "Two Systems," *Emporia Gazette*, October 19, 1934.

Throughout his editorial reports, White used his home state and hometown as comparative models. In a 1933 *Gazette* editorial, he wrote that in New York City “the percentage of vacant business buildings and offices is about double what it is in Emporia or any other Kansas town.”<sup>15</sup> In another, he argued that Emporia factories staffed by men with experience in their occupation had an advantage in efficiency over state run factories staffed by the unemployed.<sup>16</sup> His editorial perspective represented a balanced, wait-and-see approach to the big economic questions facing the country. He endorsed and advocated the capitalistic profit model, one which he believed strengthened America, but urged readers to maintain an open mind to policies that might offer temporary relief. He placed emphasis, of course, on the prospect that these measures must only be used temporarily.<sup>17</sup> Though the political sentiments expressed by Haldeman-Julius and White during the 1930s could not be more diametrically opposed, the shared belief that their writing could influence public opinion links their careers.

### **Expanding His Reach**

By the late 1930s, William Lindsay White was a mainstay on the editorial page of his father’s newspaper. Based on the reputation of the *Emporia Gazette*, and the high esteem that many held for William Allen White’s Midwestern perspective, this platform allowed him to reach a fairly wide audience. Moreover, William Allen White used his influence to help his son secure progressively wider distribution and greater publication opportunities.<sup>18</sup> In 1938, White traveled to Europe under contract with CBS to report on the escalating tensions. His reports were

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<sup>15</sup> William Lindsay White, “Stay West,” *Emporia Gazette*, January 17, 1933.

<sup>16</sup> William Lindsay White, “Two Systems,” *Emporia Gazette*, October 19, 1934.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid.

<sup>18</sup> Jernigan, 94-117. William Allen White helped his son by writing personal contacts at various national magazines and publishing outlets, including John Wheeler, and also encouraged William Lindsay White to use his “Take a Look” column as a syndicated offering to other newspapers.

broadcast by CBS radio affiliates and in print via the North America Newspaper Alliance. He remained in Europe over the next three years and provided Alliance papers, as well as the *Emporia Gazette*, with assessments of Nazi power, the reaction of European populations, and updates on British resistance. In 1940, these columns appeared in the *Gazette* as a ten-part series entitled “Take a Look.” White’s experience overseas helped him establish his reputation as a voice independent from his father, William Allen White, who had strongly supported isolation.<sup>19</sup> Moreover, the foreign experience provided him with a springboard toward an independent public platform.

The boost White received from his father and the CBS broadcasts resulted in a significantly expanded national profile. On December 17, 1941, William Lindsay White became a roving reporter for *Reader’s Digest*.<sup>20</sup> The agreed upon contract compensated White based upon the popularity of his stories in comparison to others appearing in the *Digest* and “paid him \$2,500 for each that appeared higher than 18<sup>th</sup> in the reader poll and \$1,500 if he appeared lower.”<sup>21</sup> Furthermore, as a result of this agreement, he would “accept no assignments from anyone else and that this is in essence an agreement to secure his exclusive services to the *Reader’s Digest* in all forms of work which is in their province.”<sup>22</sup> This career move differed greatly from that of either Haldeman-Julius or Franklin who had established their own publications. DeWitt Wallace’s *Reader’s Digest* had been founded in 1922, just a few years after both Haldeman-Julius Publications and the *Kansas City Call* were formed. By 1941 it

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<sup>19</sup> Manners-Smith, 34. Jernigan, 120-130. Manners Smith details the change in Lindsay White’s views towards the coming war and his conflict with his father over isolationism. For William Allen White’s stance on isolation see: William M. Tuttle Jr, “Aid-to-the-Allies Short-of-War versus American Intervention, 1940: A Reappraisal of William Allen White’s Leadership,” *Journal of American History* 56 (March 1970): 840-58. Also, see: Jernigan, 114-121. Jernigan focuses on Lindsay White’s activities overseas and how they influenced his later career prospects.

<sup>20</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 12 December 1942. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

represented one of the nation's most successful magazines, partly because it provided one of the primary forums through which the exploits of American soldiers reached mass audiences.<sup>23</sup> As a result of the magazine's widening subscription base and the increasing interest in war material during World War II, any author publishing regularly within the pages of *Reader's Digest* could expect his stories to reach vast audiences and his reputation to blossom.

White remained under contract with the magazine for the next three decades and came to value immensely his relationship with it and its founder.<sup>24</sup> The political leanings of Wallace loomed large over the magazine and White's writing. Heidenry described Wallace as someone who believed wholeheartedly in individualism and who "opposed anything that seemed to intrude on the sanctity of an individual's freedoms." He "was determined in both the U.S. and the international editions to repeat his simple message . . . democracy, based on the free enterprise system, safeguarded individual liberties."<sup>25</sup> During the outpouring of patriotism during World War II, the personal politics of Wallace and the conservative vision of William Lindsay White flourished.<sup>26</sup> John Heidenry argues that *Reader's Digest* catered to rural audiences who felt alienated by rapid changes gripping the country and that Wallace's magazine "became the secular Bible of this deeply religious and immensely disaffected and fearful majority."<sup>27</sup> Like the publications of Haldeman-Julius and Franklin, *Reader's Digest* sought to fulfill a niche within the public sphere and unite a disparate populace via shared ideology. Unlike Haldeman-Julius, White did not have the editorial freedom to publish overly controversial material, nor did he have Haldeman-Julius and Franklin's unfettered access to the public sphere through a personal

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<sup>23</sup> John Heidenry, *Theirs Was the Kingdom: Lila and DeWitt Wallace and the Story of Reader's Digest* (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 1993), 122. Heidenry asserted that "on the brink of a great world war, the *Reader's Digest* had in just eighteen years become indisputably an American institution."

<sup>24</sup> Jernigan, 248. During White's early career he reported directly to Wallace at the *Digest*. As Wallace's personal involvement in the magazine waned, so too did White's enthusiasm for the *Digest*.

<sup>25</sup> Heidenry, 202.

<sup>26</sup> Jernigan, 141.

<sup>27</sup> Heidenry, 53.

publication. White wrote to Wallace in 1943 to inquire about *Reader's Digest's* relationship with other publications: "As an editor of the *Digest* I wouldn't care to have my stuff appearing in any publications which was on unfriendly terms with the *Digest*." He continued, "I hope you will let me know, so that my future agents won't embarrass me by getting me into print where I don't want to be."<sup>28</sup> While this might seem like a trivial matter, the publication forum constituted an important indicator of political persuasion during this period. Thus, if White's work appeared in a magazine more liberal, it could have limited his ability to publish future stories in the *Digest*. As time passed, and as the winds of social and political change blew, White remained wedded to the *Digest* and the magazine's politics in order to ensure publication of his writings.

### The War Years

The tumult of war increased the demand for foreign correspondents and America's appetite for war stories. As a result, William Lindsay White's career prospects improved as he blended military reporting, exciting stories of heroism, and American optimism. *They Were Expendable*, first published in 1942, was White's first wartime publication and told the story of PT boat crews who had been dispersed to maintain a last ditch defense effort of the bases in the Philippines. As the situation deteriorated, however, the crews of "the four surviving boats snatch General MacArthur, his family, and staff from Corregidor in a daring night run" and then "the narrators take different routes to the last American airfield in the Philippines" while others stay behind.<sup>29</sup> Throughout the book, White allowed the four soldiers to narrate the action and relate their stories. One of the soldiers explained the outlook of the men who remained in Australia: "The rest of us" he said, "consider ourselves as being expendable, which is something that may

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<sup>28</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 18 August 1943. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>29</sup> Jernigan, 145.

come to any soldier. We are ready for it, and I think they will see that we will meet it squarely when it comes.”<sup>30</sup> To White, these men did not see their situation as unfortunate, undesirable, or requiring sympathy. Rather, they willingly sacrificed themselves for the survival of others and prepared to meet the upcoming Japanese attack with stoic resolve. White used his book to present a clear portrait of American resolve, which glorified self-sacrifice, to illustrate national strength during a time of great crisis came from the average citizen. His unwavering faith in the strength of the American character resonated throughout his work and represented a continuation of the even-keeled optimism readers had admired in his father.

Later developed into a motion picture, White’s initial wartime tale gained popularity for more reasons than just the recent memory of Pearl Harbor. Jernigan asserts that “it had novelty, youth, clear-cut villains, a David-versus-Goliath conflict, action, suspense, sexual romance, and a final fast-paced sequence with a last minute rescue.”<sup>31</sup> Beyond all the factors present within good fiction, *They Were Expendable* contained the tale of “the escape of flamboyant Gen. Douglas MacArthur . . . the audacity to criticize haphazard defense efforts and give the public some insight into the United States Army-Navy rivalry that was to mar the early years of the Pacific war.”<sup>32</sup> Not just a chronicle of contemporary politics and current events, “it was cleverly written; four young navy officers told their tales in their own words, vividly and directly.”<sup>33</sup> The commercial and critical success of *They Were Expendable* led to increased cooperation between White and military public relations personnel, who continued to provide him with story material.<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> William Lindsay White, *They Were Expendable* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1942), 204.

<sup>31</sup> Jernigan, 143. Jernigan interviewed Lambert Davis, White’s editor during this period.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid.

<sup>33</sup> Ibid.

<sup>34</sup> Jernigan, 142.

White's desire to take advantage of a military ready to supply access to its soldiers and a market for stories of heroism overlapped with his personal belief in American strength and the value of self-reliance and, ultimately, self-sacrifice. Yet, he shared with Haldeman-Julius and Franklin a strong condemnation of the exclusionary aspects of American society. White used his writing during this period to forcefully affirm the ability of African Americans to share equally the rewards of American society and to lambast people and institutions that delayed racial progress.

In 1942, three separate articles appeared under White's byline that explored the role of African Americans in America's defense. In the first, *Survey Graphic's* "Negro Officers: 1917 and Now," White highlighted improvements within the training programs available to African American soldiers. He wrote that in contrast to World War I era policies when "all Negro officers were trained in a special camp at Des Moines," the army currently had "Negro officer candidates are in training at army schools at Fort Benning, Ga.; Camp Lee, Va; Fort Sill, Okla; Camp Davis, N. C.; Aberdeen, Md., and Carlisle Barracks, Pa."<sup>35</sup> Not only had the number of camps ballooned since 1917, but the cooperation between white and African American candidates at the school was much more prevalent. White reported that "those in charge say there is little difference between the way the behavior of Negroes and that of whites." Despite this mingling, however, White also noted that "the Navy and Marine Corps offer the Negro only cooks' and stewards' jobs" while within the army African American soldiers could become combat pilots through the Tuskegee program.<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>35</sup> William Lindsay White, "Negro Officers: 1917 and Now," *Survey Graphic* (April 1942): 192. In addition, White provides historical context through a brief overview of African American's military contribution – "American Negroes will fight; Nobody could deny that, for their military tradition is older than the Republic."

<sup>36</sup> *Ibid.*, 194.

White highlighted the current status of African American training and condemned the environment of segregation. He noted, for example, that “the only trace of segregation is that the Negroes usually sit at an end mess table and, when they have time for a movie, [or] attend a theatre reserved for a Negro regiment stationed in the same camp.” More serious, in White’s view, was that once the officers graduated they faced the difficult task of inspiring respect among his men and dealing with segregation off base. He reported that “the Negro officer has serious problems. An officer is supposed to uphold the dignity of his uniform by eating only in first-class restaurants.” Yet, “in the South Negro officers are barred from white restaurants. Every army post has a club for commissioned officers, but the Negro is definitely given the idea that he’s not expected there.”<sup>37</sup> A few months later, *Reader’s Digest’s* condensed version of White’s article echoed similar optimistic themes and included essentially an identical format and take-home message.

While both published articles praised the actions of African American soldiers and expressed optimism about their future contribution to American military strength, neither contained the polemical condemnation of American racism that White felt. An unpublished version of these articles, titled “If a Nigger Can Fly,” is a much harsher depiction of the resistance African American soldiers faced. This version opened with details of an incident that occurred in Arkansas and included racial epithets being hurled at African American soldiers and white officers by belligerent locals. White wrote that Arkansas state troopers “drew their machine guns and ordered the negro soldiers to get off the road and over into the ditch where they belonged. . . ‘and if any of you don’t like it, just open your mouth and I’ll blow your brains

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<sup>37</sup> William Lindsay White, “Negro Officers: 1917 and Now,” 194.



out. You're in Arkansas, now.'"<sup>38</sup> The antagonism that greeted the troops in Arkansas applied equally to both the white trainers and the African American trainees. In addition, White used his article to highlight the reluctance some white military personnel felt toward increased opportunities for African American soldiers. He described a white soldier "who placed the Negroes 23<sup>rd</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup>, and 25<sup>th</sup> on his rating sheet. When asked by the commanding officer why he had done it, he said it was because he had heard the other boys speak so highly of the Negroes that he knew they would get high ratings." To equalize this sentiment, "he had put them at the bottom of his sheet just 'to give some white boy a chance.'"<sup>39</sup>

Furthermore, White used the reaction of an "old air corps sergeant" to underscore the generational gap between other soldiers with their rigid racial views and the trainees who were more likely to freely intermingle. White wrote that "the tough old air corps sergeant says 'why don't be foolish, anybody ought to know that a nigger can't fly. . . you know yourself that a nigger hasn't got the go-to-hell attitude it takes to make a good pilot.'" This soldier believed that training African Americans not only represented a program destined to fail but also a "waste of good equipment . . . when these jigaboos bust out, then they can turn the equipment over to someone else and begin really to train some flyers." Though this attitude was not common among the men White interviewed, he noted in the unpublished version that "since the war 1200 boys have been admitted, of whom only 15 were negroes, a little over one percent in a nation whose Negro population is ten percent of the total."<sup>40</sup> Ultimately, the tenor of White's unpublished article on African American soldiers bears a similar optimism to that of his published articles in terms of African American capabilities and increased opportunities. Writing

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<sup>38</sup> William Lindsay White, "If a Nigger Can Fly," William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>39</sup> William Lindsay White, "If a Nigger Can Fly."

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

a decade after Marcet Haldeman-Julius had toured Kansas colleges and universities in 1927, he echoed the sentiment that through education and training African Americans can participate equally with white Americans. That White left most of his acerbic descriptions of racism and criticism of continued segregation in the unpublished version and published primarily optimistic observations reveals the chasm between White's personal views and the limitations placed on him by publishers, limitations not faced by Marcet, who had unfiltered access to publication via the Haldeman-Julius Publishing venture.

In 1943, White returned to the subject of heroic soldierly exploits and self-sacrificing American men. *Queens Die Proudly* followed the tumultuous events that befell "the Flying Fortresses, those queens of the sky which fought to the death in the skies above the Philippines, Java, and Australia."<sup>41</sup> The initial page of the story in *Reader's Digest* promised "here is the searing reality of war. And here, too, is the uplifting record of gallantry and devotion to duty which is a sure promise of victory."<sup>42</sup> The story delivered on these promises, with descriptions of casualties, survival, and self-sacrificing action. White's narrator explained, "on a Fortress . . . the pilot must be the last to leave. In the air force, this is more than a gallant gesture. Because somebody has to stay on the stick to keep her level and right side up while the other eight make the jump."<sup>43</sup> In other words, the pilot must endure diminished chances of survival in order to allow the other crew members to safely parachute to the ground. The narrator continued,

'Well, Colin stayed on the stick as his plane dropped with its oxygen system flaming, and all eight guys got out, and I suppose carefully counted one-thousand-two-thousand-three-thousand like it says in the book before they pulled their cords and their chutes blossomed. But by the time Colin's turn came, he was too close to the ground that he never had a chance to crack his chute.'<sup>44</sup>

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<sup>41</sup> William Lindsay White, "Queens Die Proudly," *Reader's Digest*, April 1943, 11.

<sup>42</sup> *Ibid.*, 11.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, 42.

While this anecdote represents only a single event in *Queens Die Proudly*, it provides a glimpse of self-sacrifice within White's story. Furthermore, that the narrator of the story references the dead flier's wife and children following the explanation of his death humanizes both the narrator and flier and puts the pilot's sacrifice into the larger context of domestic values. White's writing spread positive messages that focused on the American war effort and reflected his optimistic political and social perspective. His wartime stories used the public sphere to highlight the sacrifices made by all Americans and the dedication and heroism of America's soldiers.

### **An Idea Becomes a Story**

When White accepted a contract with *Reader's Digest*, he became part of a vast network of roving reporters, researchers, and independent authors. Most of his writing began with either an idea he proposed to the *Digest* or one assigned to him by an editor. Jernigan explained that "the *Digest* staff thoroughly vetted his suggested topics and edited his submission to fit the essentially conservative, simplistically optimistic tone of the magazine."<sup>45</sup> White's writing process typically followed a similar pattern of identifying stories, collecting information, and then creating a narrative framework. Jernigan explained that "Bill takes the information given him, selects representative figures and anecdotes, then puts them in a carefully contrived narrative structure in which his characters seem to tell their own stories in their own words."<sup>46</sup> This passion for letting the personal stories of his subjects shine is evident in the Forward to *Queens Die Proudly*. White wrote that at the behest of the principal men involved in the story, it should be noted that he "wished to build the story on personal narratives, confining it wherever possible to what these five men had seen and felt, so in fairness to them it should be judged only

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<sup>45</sup> Jernigan, 141.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 235.

on that basis.”<sup>47</sup> Similar comments of his appeared in *They Were Expendable*. After the finished manuscript was approved by *Digest* editors, selected portions were excerpted in the magazine and later appeared in full-length book form.

Occasionally, White pushed back against *Digest* efforts to market his work. He wrote, for example, a letter criticizing a tentative title change to a story that eventually appeared as “Fliers Who Fight Without Guns.” Similar to both *They Were Expendable* and *Queens Die Proudly*, the story was filled with anecdotes and tales of soldierly courage and highlighted the contribution of reconnaissance aviators. Despite their lack of armaments, fliers routinely put themselves in harm’s way for imperative information and relied upon equipment, intelligence, and sheer courage to destroy multiple enemy aircraft. Moreover, they provided essential information to other fliers. White told Wallace that “I noticed that the piece on the aerial reconnaissance . . . is now being called ‘The Recco Boys Deliver the Goods,’ I hope this title is only tentative because somehow it has a jaunty, slangy, Rover-boy ring which makes me writhe with embarrassment.”<sup>48</sup>

While Haldeman-Julius and Franklin had free rein to publish whatever they wanted in their newspapers, and Haldeman-Julius could solicit exactly the type of Little Blue Book he desired, White had to obtain the approval of Wallace and the *Digest* before his stories were published. Generally this presented little obstacle, though it did prevent White from condemning segregation as stridently as he wanted. As White’s career blossomed, however, and he had increasing personal resources and stature, the editorial control of the *Digest* became more frustrating for him. In the 1940s, White saw his role as journalist and author expanding, and he wanted to use his platform to spread the words of servicemen throughout the public sphere. In

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<sup>47</sup> William Lindsay White, *Queens Die Proudly* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1943), Forward.

<sup>48</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 4 September 1943. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

the 1950s and 1960s White sought increased editorial control in order to advocate and amplify issues he found personally important. Though he would not have described himself in Habermasian terms, in essence he did seek to use his writing to influence his audience and American discourse.

### **Spearheading the *Gazette***

Another boost to White's influence came in 1944 when he inherited control of the *Emporia Gazette*. Though the editorial page continued to note the presence of William Allen White - the paper's managerial information read "William Allen White, Editor, 1895-1944" on line one and just below "Mrs. W. A. White and W. L. White Editors and Owners" – this gave William Lindsay White unfettered access to the public sphere and allowed him to balance national and local concerns across his multiple publishing outlets. During the 1940s and 1950s, William Lindsay White divided his time between Emporia and New York City, helping him shape the content and policies of the *Gazette* while continuing as a roving reporter for *Reader's Digest* and writing novels.<sup>49</sup> He remained in constant contact with Ted McDaniel, the city editor of the *Gazette*, and suggested stories the paper should pursue and stylistic changes to the paper's design.

The death of the *Gazette's* William Allen White also left a void at the National American Newspaper Association. John Wheeler wrote to William Lindsay White in 1944 confirming the organization's interest in having White cover both the Democratic and Republican nominating conventions. The contract required that White provide "a daily story while each convention is in session, and one or two preliminary stories, depending on developments, giving any information you may be able to obtain about the trends and prospects." Wheeler reminded White that "this is

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<sup>49</sup> *Emporia Gazette*. This information can be found on the editorial page throughout the 1940s and 1950s.

substantially the same coverage your father furnished during the many years that he reported the convention for us. I am particularly pleased to have his son take his place, and I am sure he would be.”<sup>50</sup> The political assignment thrilled White because it afforded him an opportunity to expand his national audience and to cover events of personal interest. Unable to resist a jab at Wheeler in his letter of acceptance, he responded that because his father had fulfilled this role for the group he “would have been glad to do the job for nothing or just for the fun of it” and he was glad to accept Mr. Snively’s offer of half the former price.”<sup>51</sup> This political reporting gave White an even broader platform and cemented the linkage between his career and that of William Allen White. Further, this development meant that, like Haldeman-Julius, White had multiple public sphere platforms through which to communicate with his audience. Moreover, it meant that he could shape his writing depending on where it was going to be published.

### **Reporting from Overseas**

Journalists during the Cold War provided American readers with information regarding world events, domestic social and political developments, and reassurance about the superiority of American values. David Davies argues that the majority of American journalists were predisposed against the Soviet Union because they were “pro-business by disposition and distrustful of any threat to laissez-fair capitalism, including many of the reforms of the New Deal.” He further adds that during the 1950s American journalism “remained respectful of government’s security interests” and provided little coverage that criticized government or

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<sup>50</sup> John Wheeler to William Lindsay White, 5 April 1944. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. The connection of father and son within the newspaper business one again became clear and the lineage clearly gave William Lindsay White a boost. The response of William Lindsay White to Wheeler’s letter indicates his growing unease with this connection.

<sup>51</sup> William Lindsay White to John Wheeler, 6 April 1944. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

military activities.<sup>52</sup> White's Cold War writing did not stray from this model and positioned him simultaneously as a purveyor of information and as a propaganda minister for American values. His journalistic curiosity and patriotism meshed with the desire of *Reader's Digest* to send him abroad and inform its readership about foreign governments, peoples, and the possibility of American friendship with other countries.<sup>53</sup> White's trips throughout Europe between 1945 and 1947 reveal his knack for storytelling and an explicit desire to highlight the potential for governmental abuses and atrocities.

White's trip to Russia in 1947 was aided by the National American Newspaper Association. White asked Wheeler to assist him with a letter of introduction suggesting, "It would be most useful if you would add a paragraph to the effect that I was a trained reporter with the average American viewpoint." White also noted current political conditions necessitated the fair and impartial coverage he could provide. He told Wheeler that because of "the rigid visa control in Soviet occupied countries, Americans must depend for their news on reporters who are preponderantly either pro-Communist or strong Communist sympathizers." Thus, "the average pro-Democratic American viewpoint is always entirely unrepresented in these countries."<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> David R. Davies, *The Postwar Decline of American Newspapers, 1945-1965* The History of American Journalism Series, No. 7. Ed. James D. Startt, Wm. David Sloan. (Praeger, Westport, CT: 2006). 40-48. Davies's main focus in terms of Cold War journalism is the coverage of McCarthy and the increasing criticism of American journalism as overly positive and uncritical. White fits squarely into the mold of American cheerleader and Soviet critic. Also see Tom Pendergast, *Creating the Modern Man: American Magazines and Consumer Culture, 1900-1950* (Columbia, MO: University of Missouri Press, 2000). Despite being squarely focused on masculinity, Pendergast's work provides an effective examination of Cold War magazine's preoccupation with social qualities and American strength. Also see *American Cold War Culture*, ed. Douglas Field. (Edinburgh, Scotland: Edinburgh University Press, 2005). Covering topics ranging from television to race relations, this work provides a wide ranging examination of American culture during the Cold War. For an analysis of a publication comparable to *Reader's Digest* see *Looking at Life Magazine*, ed. Erika Lee Doss, (Washington D. C., Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001).

<sup>53</sup> Joanne P. Sharp. *Condensing the Cold War: Reader's Digest and American Identity* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000). Sharp's work illuminates the anti-communist agenda of the magazine and provides a detailed analysis of how the *Digest* became so fervently anti-communist. She also analyzes linkages between anti-communism and American values through *Digest* content. Her work also analyzes the shift in *Digest* content following the end of the Cold War.

<sup>54</sup> William Lindsay White to John Wheeler, 1 March 1946. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

White's work for the North America Newspaper Alliance helped solidify his reputation for effective foreign reporting and popular prose, although many still primarily associated him with his father. He saw himself first and foremost as a journalist with a strong bent toward democracy and a deep personal interest in the topics that he covered. White's correspondence with Wheeler underscored his belief in the power of journalists to inform readers about national and world events. Further, it demonstrated the adversarial relationship he saw between a system based on free information exchange and the closed communist regime in Russia.

White blended straightforward reporting focused on the anecdotal experiences of interview subjects with his own personal perspective to create a sense of place for his readers. He provided vivid descriptions which emphasized unique aspects of physical surroundings, mood, and location. Though White was an unlikely world traveler, many of White's readers would never experience international travel nor have firsthand relationships with non-Americans and his writing became a virtual travelogue for them. Thus, his writing could be consumed as entertainment or as news. At the heart of White's writing and his trips to foreign lands lay the interactions he had with the people and the insight they gave him about the character and strength of their nation. White believed that each nation's populace represented the country's strength, vitality, and potential. As a result, their opinion and temperament became their destiny. Throughout his writing on foreign peoples, White emphasized universal human traits, such as a desire for freedom, self-autonomy, and prosperity, in order to highlight each nation's potential.

An overview of White's reports from Europe provides a sense of how he blended journalistic integrity with ideology during his early career. The postwar period for White represented a moment of great peril. As peace returned to Europe, the role of the nation-state in securing borders and controlling populations threatened to become omnipresent and crush both



individuality and free expression. In 1947, he warned that “now, in the making of this strange peace, we herd millions around the map of Europe and change languages, flags, cultures and boundaries, not because the people desire it, but because it is for the convenience of the All Powerful State.”<sup>55</sup> Centralization threatened the ability of local communities to exist independently and White’s opposition to an expanding government, foreign or domestic, reflected his small-town Kansas roots and consistent emphasis on individual autonomy and self-reliance. As he reported on foreign peoples in his frequent *Reader’s Digest* assignments, White focused intently on free expression. Beyond a personal involvement in the publishing industry, White’s underlying commitment to freedom of speech stemmed from his belief that it played a vital part in a functioning democratic government. By congratulating, or criticizing, foreign societies on their level of free expression, White evaluated their ability to embody American values.

### ***Report on the Russians***

In its introduction, White wrote that *Report on the Russians* “is basically the story of a six-week trip to Russia which I took during the summer of 1944 in company with Eric Johnston, President of the United States Chamber of Commerce, and Joyce O’Hara, his assistant.”<sup>56</sup> White believed that direct interaction with the people, location, and economic system provided the clearest understanding of both foreign and domestic circumstances. While in Russia, he mused, “The way to understand capitalism is not to memorize the long words economists use. It is to go someplace where they don’t have any, and see what they do instead.”<sup>57</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> William Lindsay White, “Report on the Poles,” *Reader’s Digest*, January 1947, 157.

<sup>56</sup> William Lindsay White, *Report on the Russians* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1945),

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<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, 48.

As White flew over the Russian countryside in 1944, he wondered, “What have the farmers got out of socialism in this quarter century of backbreaking work and bloodshed? Undoubtedly more education and better clothes . . . but nothing I can see from a mile in the air.”<sup>58</sup> On the ground, White asserted that Moscow had “wide, incredibly empty streets, sidewalks full of hurrying, shabby people, walking past dingy shops in dilapidated buildings.” On the horizon, down every street, loomed “monotonous rows of uninteresting apartments, concrete beehives which sometimes make an effort at beauty in ornamentation. But it is half-hearted, like the architecture of an institution.”<sup>59</sup> Repeatedly White described Russian architecture and buildings as drab, dreary, unimpressive, and depressing, and a visual manifestation of communism. “This does not mean that either the Russian people or the Soviet governments do not want beauty; there are many sporadic and bungling efforts in that direction: it means that they have a poor system for getting it.” Under the current communist system, “competition has gone from Moscow’s shops and buildings; over everything rests the dull, unimaginative hand of a bureaucracy which, in the absence of competition, produces only dreary mediocrity.”<sup>60</sup>

In terms of the people White encountered, he hoped to make clear that he approached his subjects with no ill will. He wrote, “I liked them very much—in many ways they are like Americans. Actually, since we are all descended from Adam there is no such thing as a ‘young’ nation; but they have a fresh unspoiled outlook which is close to our own.”<sup>61</sup> Despite human commonality, White identified physical and psychological differences between the people he observed. While in Russia, White took in a performance at Tchaikovsky Concert Hall, observing

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<sup>58</sup> White, *Report on the Russians*, 19.

<sup>59</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, 154.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, 1.

that “the crowd is almost as poorly fed as it is poorly dressed. The Red Army officers are robust enough. But too many of these Russian women have bad complexions, which seem to indicate lack of vitamins.” White found himself amazed at the physical condition of the Russian people, writing, “I have always thought of Russians as big people; potentially they probably are. But these people, in their twenties and thirties, were children during the hard days about the revolution; years of malnutrition show in their bad bone structure.” White’s observations further differentiated between Russian people languishing under communism and his American readers enjoying increased strength and prosperity in the postwar years. White asserted further that it was “no wonder we three average-sized Americans stand half a head higher than the Red Army officers who parade here.”<sup>62</sup>

White told his readers that the relationship between rulers and the ruled in Russia depended on coercion and threats. He wrote that “a reporter from one of the western countries, who knows Poland well, tells me that the government . . . is paying particular attention to the youth . . . the government hopes to give these kids glittering idols which will take their minds away from freedom.”<sup>63</sup> Through the metaphor of a prison, White explained to his readers that “slowly I am beginning to understand this place and its people.” He challenged readers to “suppose you had been born and spent all your life in a moderately well run penitentiary, which kept you working hard and provided a bunk to sleep in, three daily meals and enough clothes to keep you warm.” Within this facility, “the walls were covered with posters explaining that freedom and justice could only be found within its bars, that outside was only disorder, strikes, uncertainty, unemployment, and exploitation of workers.” If someone had lived his or her life in such a prison, with no knowledge of an alternative lifestyle or government, White thought it

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<sup>62</sup> White, *Report on the Russians*, 26.

<sup>63</sup> White, “Report on the Poles,” 157.

logical that they would resist change. Ultimately, however, he argued that such an arrangement bore a stark resemblance to an American prison - “food and clothing in both places are about the same, maybe a little better in Lansing” - but the key difference stems from people in prison retaining free speech and forfeiture of choice through the commission of crime rather than birth into a closed society.<sup>64</sup>

White’s criticism of the Soviet Union centered on the system of government and the superiority of capitalism, not on the Russian people. White argued that Soviet communism prevented the Russian people from living a free life. After his visit to a Russian factory, where the factory foreman bragged about low levels of absenteeism, White argued, “absenteeism seems to be as rare here as it would be in the Atlanta penitentiary, and for the same reasons.”<sup>65</sup> The distinction between government and people allowed White to praise the potential of the Russian people and ascribe shortcomings and faults to communism rather than to inherent racial, or cultural, differences.<sup>66</sup> At a dinner of factory managers and upper management, White observed similarities between the up-and-coming generation of Russians and similar-aged businessmen in the United States. He explained that the young Russians “are familiar – serious, orthodox, industrious young men anxious to get on in the world – the same type you might find at a junior executives’ lunch in an American factory.” In the United States, White argued, these types of men:

would be registered Republicans without giving it too much thought, but because the boss was a Republican and because it was the party of respectability and its hallmark would be helpful to a young man anxious to get on in the world. Here they are Communists for the same reason. . . . young men most likely to succeed followed the Communist Party

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<sup>64</sup> *Report on the Russians*, 61-62.

<sup>65</sup> *Ibid.*, 49.

<sup>66</sup> The logic of White’s argument here is similar to his views toward African Americans as well. Inherent differences are non-existent, but socialization and cultural values separate people from one another.

because it represented authority, power, and wealth, as has the Republican party to a lesser extent in America.<sup>67</sup>

White cleverly connects the allure of communism not to promises of equality or social leveling, which he fervently denies it provides, but to the possibility of social acceptance and the building of connections. As a result, he criticized the party without criticizing the young Russians who followed it and he stressed commonality between the American and Russian people on a base level, with only government influence creating wide differences.

Finally, White's *Report on the Russians* highlighted the rigid controls that restricted Western books and movies within the country, noting that "public opinion here is handled with the consummate skill of an artist on a giant concert organ, whose hands run deftly over many keys to produce one marching series of harmonies."<sup>68</sup> He asserted, for example, that even though "Soviet intellectuals have read and appreciate the artistry of *The Grapes of Wrath*," elite consumption of Western literature did not translate to mass consumption. Not only did Soviet censors want to limit citizen s' ability to understand and witness Western lifestyles, the differences between Russia and America prevented audiences from understanding literature in the same way. He noted that "released for mass circulation as a movie, it [*The Grapes of Wrath*] is bound to bewilder the average citizen of the Soviet Union. The Joad family would not be pitied for their clothing, which except for its American cut would be indistinguishable in a Moscow crowd."<sup>69</sup> White's use of *The Grapes of Wrath* is particularly noteworthy given the topic and content of Steinbeck's novel. It allowed White to simultaneously emphasize Russia's lack of access to Western information and also the poverty of the average Russian.

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<sup>67</sup> White, *Report on the Russians*, 62.

<sup>68</sup> Ibid., 46.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., 63.

## Germany and Poland

The ruins of Berlin greeted White upon his arrival in the German capital in 1947, and provided a stark reminder of the horrors the city had endured since his last visit in 1939. As he observed the rubble and the “occasional underfed pedestrian walking slowly down the middle of the street,” he put the scene into focus for his reader: “It was as though someone had wiped out all of Brooklyn and the Bronx and Manhattan below 210<sup>th</sup> Street, leaving only the residential sections of the Upper Bronx and Queens.” For his Midwestern readers, he wrote that it was “as though all of downtown Chicago were flat until you got out almost as far as Evanston.”<sup>70</sup>

Descriptions of war-ravaged Europe erupted following the liberation of France and Germany after World War II, and White’s prose is among many. Setting the scene for his readers represents the prelude to his main analytical thrust: assessing the war’s impact on Germany’s people and deciphering blame and responsibility within the context of their nation’s atrocities.

White’s analysis of Germany centered upon the character and opinions of its people, but his conclusions were far more optimistic than they had been in Russia. White asked, “What is any people – Americans, Germans, Jews, Anglo-Saxons – but the product of geography and its past?” In White’s view, the war had torn asunder non-Germans’ factual understanding of the German people and their character. He lamented that “during the war we had had only distant glimpse of their reactions to the great drama of history in which they were playing so tragic a role.” Despite the fact that “now and then a Swedish journalist would emerge from Berlin to write an honest book . . . the picture had been distorted either by the Germans’ own wartime propaganda or by ours.”<sup>71</sup> The key purpose of his *Report on the Germans* rested on his ability to understand that “if Germany were to become a democracy, its power would presently stem from

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<sup>70</sup> William Lindsay White, *Report on the Germans* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1947), 43.

<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

its people, so the answer lay here. And since they would be a product of their past, I realized that I must get those missing pages of their story – what happened to their thinking since 1939.”<sup>72</sup>

Prior to his foray into Germany, White worried that a reluctance to share information and the fact that “all oppressed, or subject peoples never tell their rulers quite all of the truth, but instead tell them what they now want these victors to believe they think,” might preclude him from obtaining a clear read on the German people. As a result, White’s strategy relied upon “three German legmen, two of whom were well trained reporters and all of whom, I think, were dependable. Their assignment was simply to circulate among their friends or people they happened to run into at bars” and to ascertain German answers to “casual questions such as: What do you think of the Americans and Russians? When did you first decide that Germany lost the war? When, during the war, did you first hear of the extermination camps?”<sup>73</sup>

In the chapter titled “What Do the Germans Think Now?” White selected “the most interesting and representative of these case histories” and pieced together a representative view of German popular opinion. He focused on stories that revealed the thoughts of many “Germans who had never wanted the war in the first place, or Germans who may have wanted the war at the start but changed their minds toward the middle or at the end.”<sup>74</sup> White sought to separate the atrocities committed by the Nazi regime from the beliefs of average Germans in order to repair the image of the German people. Within the context of the late 1940s, the potential for Germany to provide the United States with a balance against Russian power loomed large. Thus, White’s writing clearly intended to demonstrate that non-Nazi Germans represented acceptable allies for America during the Cold War.

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 41.

<sup>73</sup> White, *Report on the Germans*, 107.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 127.

In another chapter, titled “Wanderers,” White explored the war’s impact by traveling to a Jewish refugee camp in Berlin to witness firsthand these shattered lives and American attempts to restore them. White’s case study is Harold Fishbein: “. . . plump and not too tall, with that type of large round head which anthropologists describe as Alpine. He is Jewish in race and Christian in religion, and speaks with a slow Midwestern drawl, as unshakably American as apple pie a la mode.” Through the persona of Fishbein, White argued that America’s continued involvement in Germany prevented Jewish populations from being harassed by Russian soldiers, deported to lands controlled by the Russian government, and continued victimization within Germany. When White concluded his chapter on European Jews by bidding goodbye to Harold Fishbein, writing that “I turned to look back at Harold Fishbein’s open door . . . it occurred to me that perhaps the cynics were wrong, and that a lot of friendly open-hearted boys who failed to come back from this war may not, after all, have died in vain.”<sup>75</sup>

Whereas White had taken a tone of overarching pessimism in Russia and, to a much lesser extent, in Germany, he expressed optimism during his travels in Poland in 1947. Entering Poland as a veteran of trips to France, postwar Germany, and the Soviet Union, White expressed astonishment at the relative lack of machinations required of visiting foreigners. He wrote that “it was my first inkling that it is neither fair nor safe to generalize about these governments of sad little countries occupied by the Red Army. There are perhaps varying degrees of stoogery which change either with circumstances or geography.” Clearly, White entered Poland with preconceived expectations; the conditions he encountered, however, surprised him and he noted that “their iron curtains have occasional gossamer panels.”<sup>76</sup>

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<sup>75</sup> White, *Report on the Germans*, 96.

<sup>76</sup> White, “Report on the Poles,” 150.



Similar to his observations in Russia, White replicated for his readers the scene on an average Polish street. He noted that “the people on the street are better clad than I had expected, of course not so well as Americans, but far above the standard of the neighboring Soviet Union.”<sup>77</sup> Such observations do not merely relate to fashion. White goes on to assert that “if the Poles are appreciably better clad and have in their homes better things than their neighbors to the east it is only because during their two decades of independence between the World Wars they were able to make for themselves a much higher standard of living.”<sup>78</sup>

During his time among the Poles, White witnessed a people struggling under the weight of an oppressive government and an emerging propaganda apparatus pulling the strings among so called patriotic Poles. He observed, “In the slave-state a man is told where and how to live and to work, when and for whom to vote, when to cheer and when to boo, and when to scream loudly that his land is the freest and most democratic on all the globe.”<sup>79</sup> White found Poland filled with individuals who had managed to survive despite the disruptions of war, but who bristled under the control of Soviet puppets and repressive policies. He identified within Poland a desire for self-improvement and he found inspiration through open-ended and spirited discussions with Poles. He wrote, “I am not so much impressed by his complaints as by the fact that apparently any Pole, even one who works for a newspaper which is frantically pro-Soviet, nonetheless feels free to walk up to a strange American and begin airing Polish grievances against the Russians.”<sup>80</sup>

Although the Polish people lived under Soviet domination following the war, White observed a deep patriotism lying below the surface and an ever-present eagerness to discuss the successes of their country. “Scratch almost any Polish Communist except maybe one or two at

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<sup>77</sup> Ibid., 151.

<sup>78</sup> White, “Report on the Poles,” 152.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., 157.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 156.

the top of the Party,” he wrote, “and you’ll find a fervently patriotic Pole!”<sup>81</sup> In addition to hidden patriotism, White found under the surface of Polish life laid a simmering animosity toward Russian involvement that threatened to boil over at any moment. He observed, “For the present all violence is opposed by the great majority of the Polish people, who think such methods of protest are foolish and barbarous, and hope to gain their independence by gentler means.” Yet, he continued, “If the Poles lose faith in ever getting a democratically elected government of their own choosing, public sympathy may veer towards the bandits. Ballots, after all, are only a substitute for bullets.”<sup>82</sup>

### **Friends with the U.S.?**

In addition to providing clear and concise observations about foreign countries and their people to his readers, White sought to diagnose the potential for friendship - or antagonism - between foreign countries and the United States. In *Report on the Russians*, White contended that the lack of free expression and press not only harms the residents of Russia, but also the United States’ ability to relate to Russia. He asserted “correspondents abroad are the eyes and ears of our Democracy. If we are to help build up Russia, our people are entitled to complete reports from press representatives of their own choosing on what we are helping to build.” He argued that the United States must maintain an opposition to Russia in Europe until transparent and truthful information could be exchanged. Furthermore, he argued, “Any business deals should depend on their aims in Europe and Asia. We should extend no credit to Russia until it becomes much clearer than it now is that her ultimate intentions are peaceable.” On a basic level, White believed that Russia did desire peace, but “if we move our armies out of Europe before the

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<sup>81</sup> White, “Report on the Poles,” 160-61.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 154.

continent is stabilized, and if disorder, bloodshed, and riots then ensue, the Russians will move into any such political vacuum.” Ultimately, White’s trip through Russia left him believing that the country remained “plagued with suspicions of the capitalist world, and needs to be dealt with on a basis of delicately balanced firmness and friendliness.”<sup>83</sup>

## Reaction

The reaction to White’s writing, both from literary critics and general readers, represents an important aspect of White’s writing on foreigners. None of White’s writings generated more controversy than *Report on the Russians*. This work became a lightning rod for politically tinged criticism during this period. The National Council of American-Soviet Friendship published a response pamphlet calling White’s book, “The Book the Nazis Like.”<sup>84</sup> Eric Johnson had accompanied White on the trip, even signed his name to this pamphlet. It included blurbs from White’s book, along with page upon page of snippets from published reviews by intellectual luminaries who defended the Russian people and way of life. *Saturday Review* conducted a symposium on White’s book and published a series of seven responses. Norman Cousins, editor of the magazine, wrote to White and explained “since ‘Report on the Russians’ is the most controversial book of the season, we are doing a special roundup on it for our Spring Book Number.”<sup>85</sup>

On one hand, critics piled acerbic damnation upon White’s writing. Maurice Hindus wrote, “A report like White has written, riddled with inaccuracies and snap judgment . . . will enhance enormously Russian official suspicion of America.” On the other hand, critics also

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<sup>83</sup> White, *Report on the Russians*, 309.

<sup>84</sup> “The Book the Nazis Like,” William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>85</sup> Norman Cousins to William Lindsay White, 23 January 1946. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

rushed to his defense. William Henry Chamberlain argued that White's work "impresses me as the most truthful and realistic account of present-day Russia I have read for a long time."<sup>86</sup> Chamberlain added that "I liked the book because the author stands foursquare and without equivocation or weasel words for democracy and human liberty and the fundamental decencies associated with democracy and liberty."<sup>87</sup> White himself penned a "Report to the Critics" in which he steadfastly maintained that "it is all right if the current B picture at the neighborhood movie tells the audience what they want to hear at just the right time they want to hear it. A reporter, he continued, "must on occasion warn his readers of dangers ahead, even when they do not want to see them."<sup>88</sup>

White's *Report on the Germans* received similar mixed reviews but did not generate the amount of critical attention or fury. Louis L. Snyder, for example, noted that White's work featured "a fast-moving narrative style, interesting data, fascinating anecdotes. His purpose is to go behind the statistics and the arguments . . . and to give us a picture of the Germans themselves."<sup>89</sup> Snyder also argued, however, that the work reflected too much of White's own views: "he knew what he was going to find before he reached his destination and that all he needed was a supply of on-the-spot corroborations."<sup>90</sup> Snyder's criticism cannot be fully validated, but White's admiration for non-elite, autonomous, individuals and personal desire to find American allies against the Soviet Union did predispose him to sympathize with the Germans he interviewed.

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<sup>83</sup> Maurice Hindus, "Response to 'Report on the Russians,'" *Saturday Review* (Spring 1945). William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>84</sup> William Henry Chamberlain, "Response to 'Report on the Russians,'" *Saturday Review* (Spring 1945). William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>88</sup> William Lindsay White, "Report to the Critics," *Saturday Review*, October 5, 1946, 15.

<sup>89</sup> Louis L. Snyder, *Political Science Quarterly*, 63, no. 1 (Mar., 1948), 141.

<sup>90</sup> *Ibid*, 142.

During his trips overseas, White reported on the aftermath of war, the characteristics of foreign peoples, and the qualities of foreign governments. White's blend of opinion and journalism required a balance between an expression of personal expectations and undeniable facts, which over time became a tightrope he struggled to walk. In contrast to the glowing portrait of Russia presented by Marcet Haldeman-Julius in 1933, White focused on the country's opposition to capitalism, inefficiency, and relative lack of openness. Though the Kansas journalists differed greatly politically, the underlying purpose of their writing did not. Both White and Marcet Haldeman-Julius sought to give their readers a sense of foreign peoples and the possibilities their political systems could offer America. In a Habermasian view of the public sphere, both believed the information they provided readers would influence American attitudes toward foreign peoples in a positive manner.

### **The Public Sphere Platform**

Beyond his praise of American heroism and his wide-ranging observations based on travel overseas, White condemned politicians and policies which he thought undercut his ideal version of America and the prosperity of the American people. The surge of criticism generated by *Report on the Russians* caused him to express his belief that his writing provided a necessary bulwark against communism. In an internal correspondence to another *Digest* roving editor, Stanley High, he enunciated the impact of *Reader's Digest*. White stated that "the people who are most annoyed with us are the Communists because the success of the *Digest* constitutes a complete contradiction of their theories." He went on to explain that communists have "been caterwauling that their main obstacle to progress in a capitalist country is its corrupt press which is, as any good Marxian will tell you, completely controlled by the greedy corporations which

finance it through advertising and therefore govern its politics.”<sup>91</sup> Yet, “the *Reader’s Digest* . . . accepts not one thin dime of advertising from those wicked corporations which distort truth in the rest of the capitalist press. Its revenues come . . . simply from the ten million assorted people all over the country who think it is worth a quarter every month.”<sup>92</sup>

White agreed with DeWitt Wallace’s suggestion that increasing publication of *Digest* authors in other magazines would not only serve to check the influence of pro-Communist writers but also enhance the public perception of the *Digest*. He commented to High, “If all of us,” meaning the *Digest*’s roving reporters, “are appearing with some regularity in such magazines *Life*, *The Atlantic*, *Harpers*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, and *Colliers*” there would be distinct public relationship advantages. Chief among them, White wrote, was that “the opposition [communists] would not be able to depict us as a curious tweed clad little group of recluses, frightened of the outside world, and huddled into a kind of anti-Soviet monastery up there in Chappaqua where we gratefully eat peanut butter sandwiches served on diamond studded trays.”<sup>93</sup> White clearly believed that his writing had an impact upon Americans and that he could shape the public debate on contemporary issues such as communism and foreign peoples. Thus, he pursued publication and stories due to a personal desire for profit as well as an ideological commitment to what he believed were quintessential American values.

While the *Digest* gave White access to broad distribution and a nationwide audience, as well as an army of researchers, it also meant that his stories had to be tailored to fit a specific purpose. As with any reporter, not all of the stories he pursued panned out for publication, and the writing process often proved full of pitfalls. White wrote to DeWitt Wallace in 1948

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<sup>91</sup> William Lindsay White to Stanley High, 23 January 1946. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> William Lindsay White to Stanley High, 23 January 1946. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

explaining that his investigation into the North African theatre failed to yield a strong story and “a central narrative strong enough to sustain interest.” In his estimation, it was “pretty hopeless to expect to interest the general reader in the peace-time problems of an army of occupation in North Africa.”<sup>94</sup> While White certainly had his own interests, what he believed would interest the reader took precedence. That his stories relied upon concise prose and concentrated action required they follow particular types of soldiers. White lamented that the story did not have the details present in his other work, and “the group of men who gave their stories were for the most part widely separated during the actual landing, and afterward their duties were all separate so it cannot be the story of a team working together.”<sup>95</sup> Ultimately, he related this to “the fact that the four men all had star positions, therefore came ashore late and, by the very nature of their duties, were supposed to keep out of what little fighting there was.”<sup>96</sup> White’s previous stories, and effective literary formula regarding soldiers, centered on men who demonstrated active characteristics such as initiative and aggression, and who were unafraid to step outside the expected behaviors. Thus, individuals who were separated from one another, removed from the frontline action, and who stayed within the bounds of acceptability proved far less exciting and interesting for a wide audience. White’s contract with the *Digest* therefore gave him wide distribution but also caused him to be mindful of public taste and placed him at the whim of magazine editors. In this way, White differed from both Haldeman-Julius and Franklin, who had personal control over their publications and could write about whatever issues they found

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<sup>94</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 24 February 1948. In William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. RH MS 608: 8.18.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, February 24, 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

personally compelling. In addition, in his role as publisher Haldeman-Julius could use a variety of techniques to increase the marketability of a story he deemed important.<sup>97</sup>

### **An Emporian at Heart**

Since his father's death in 1944, White had remained involved with the paper not only in terms of content suggestions and format critiques, but also through a deeply personal connection. In 1948, while White continued to live in New York City as an absentee overseer of the *Emporia Gazette*, the paper suffered the sudden loss of longtime employee Rink Collins. White marked Collins's death, the tragic result of a hit-and-run accident in Emporia, by penning a poignant tribute to a man who he noted had come to the paper "forty-one years ago when the writer of these lines was only seven." Noting that Collins had become somewhat of an institution at the paper because of his longevity and because he "not only saw, but was a part of" the paper's heyday, White wrote that "he not only knew the Gazette's literary style, but which reporters were apt to misspell words, and all of our office customs, traditions, gossip and love affairs, both intramural and extra-curricular."<sup>98</sup> To White, the passing of Rink meant the paper had lost a connection to an earlier age. Through the metaphor of a departing train – "when you stand holding on to a polished brass rail at the rear of an old-fashioned observation car, looking down the track, and everything gets smaller, tinier, and further away, until . . . and it all drops gently down under the horizon, and is gone forever" – Collins's death represented "another page in our story [that] has been turned, another large part of our happy past [that] sinks gently down under the horizon."<sup>99</sup>

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<sup>97</sup> Haldeman-Julius, *First Hundred Million*, ad passim. Also see Chapter 1 discussion of Haldeman-Julius's marketing techniques.

<sup>98</sup> William Lindsay White, "Farewell to Rink," *Emporia Gazette*, December 30, 1948.

<sup>99</sup> Ibid.



The editorial eulogy to Collins demonstrated that though White physically lived elsewhere, his heart and soul remained in Emporia. It also highlighted that White continued to view the *Gazette* as a public forum worthy of expressing his private feelings. An exchange between White and Ted McDaniel in 1949 provides a sense of how White continued to shape the paper from afar. White told McDaniel that “I’ve been looking over recent Gazettes and have a list of things which all of us should fix – and this does not mean you, necessarily, are to do all of it or even any major part of it.”<sup>100</sup> He went on to stridently argue for more photographs in the paper and for a greater sense of importance in the photographs which did appear. He wrote, “I wish all of you would look at them from the standpoint of first, not how important the news story is, but how important the picture is as a picture.” Moreover, “an event can be of world-shaking importance but frequently it is one which makes a mediocre picture – one that does not attract the reader’s eye and interest him.” The letter also contained praise for several editorials which had appeared in recent editions and the overall tone of news coverage.<sup>101</sup> McDaniel welcomed White’s input. He replied a few days later:

Your letter laying down the law about pictures was a welcome one indeed and it came at a psychological moment. I had convened a staff meeting for 8 o’clock in the morning and the letter gave me an opportunity to push some projects I had in mind, as well as the one you suggested. Suggestions and criticisms from you are always welcome; I know it is much easier for you to spot weaknesses in the paper from where you are than it is for those of us so close to the forest here.<sup>102</sup>

Though White remained physically removed from the newsroom, his keen eye for presentation and his editorial vision strongly influenced *Gazette* coverage of local issues. In essence, during the period White lived outside Emporia he served as the paper’s roving editor

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<sup>100</sup> William Lindsay White to Ted McDaniel. 2 June 1949. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>101</sup> William Lindsay White to Ted McDaniel. 2 June 1949. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>102</sup> Ted McDaniel to William Lindsay White. 7 June 1949. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

and gave it a far greater profile than other comparable publications. Certainly, his national stature provided the *Emporia Gazette* with a reputation that surpassed either Haldeman-Julius Publishing or the *Kansas City Call*. White's dual pursuit of national and local issues allowed him to develop a public sphere persona based upon ideological perspective and personal community connection.

As White's career progressed, his dual role allowed him to take more initiative in choosing which stories to pursue. For example, White provided the North America Newspaper Alliance with a series of articles focused on the Alger Hiss trial. He told John Wheeler that "this Alger Hiss business for me is a Labor of Love. I think I can write a damn good series which, when the editors read them, they will want to print. I think this case has more drama than a detective story and I think what I write will come to life and that they will find it will be good copy." In fact, he wrote "I completely don't give a goddam how little you pay me for it, because I'm really in it for the fun of the thing. And have a substantial meal ticket else-where."<sup>103</sup>

White's personal ownership of a daily newspaper allowed him greater latitude to turn his journalistic skill toward stories he found personally important and compelling. Unlike Haldeman-Julius and Franklin, who depended chiefly upon their newspapers for their wide platform, and for income, White's national work represented an addendum to the firm base of community support he received in Emporia. The *Gazette* provided White a financial stability that intermittent publication in *Reader's Digest* did not and the two avenues of publication gave White's writing continual widespread distribution.

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<sup>103</sup> William Lindsay White to John Wheeler. 28 November 1949. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

## Conclusion

Early in his career, William Lindsay White received considerable assistance from his influential father and famous name. He began his writing career at the *Emporia Gazette* and used the paper as a springboard to inform readers and offer his analysis of a variety of issues. Unlike Haldeman-Julius and Franklin, who established their own public sphere platforms, White joined publications which already had a national reputation. By the late 1940s, however, he established himself as an independent voice through newspaper editorials, magazine articles, and full-length books. He increasingly balanced commitments to the *Emporia Gazette* and *Reader's Digest*, as well as local and national issues, within a public sphere persona that emphasized conservative values and a combination of capitalism, self-sacrifice, self-reliance, and anti-communism. His writing expressed faith in the American people to take his message to heart and help keep America prosperous and strong. His conservative values did not preclude him from advancing an agenda of inclusion. Increasing autonomy throughout the 1950s and 1960s gave White an ability to freely select characters and stories that embodied the qualities he admired. His tolerance and acceptance extended to non-American peoples abroad who adopted American economic and social values. His continued defense of African Americans illustrates a vision of America that included any person regardless of skin color. In addition, he continually advocated a need for strong capitalistic principles and self-reliance.

Whereas William Lindsay White largely avoided controversy, Chapter four focuses on the impact radical politics and repetitive vitriolic criticisms had on Haldeman-Julius's access to the public sphere.

## Chapter 4: Controversy, Conviction, and the Nationalization of Obscenity Law

On May 7, 1951, Milton Rippey submitted a letter to Judge Arthur J. Mellott that vouched for the character of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. Rippey, president of Harrison-Rippey Advertising Company, explained that he and Haldeman-Julius had developed a collegial friendship beyond the typical relationship between an advertising executive and his customer. As a result, Rippey argued that “I have become sufficiently familiar with his activities in the field of culture to know that he has made it a practice to place ideas and ideals above money.” Rippey also told Judge Mellott that Haldeman-Julius routinely gave “support, through insertion of his advertisements, year after year, [to] publications that express cultural ideas that parallel his own despite the fact that the revenue received from the advertising did not cover the cost of the space used.” Rippey closed by stating, “E. Haldeman-Julius through his operation of the publishing company bearing his name has made a worthwhile contribution to the educational and cultural life of the country and to the prosperity and well-being of citizens of Girard and other communities.”<sup>1</sup>

Throughout the 1940s and into the 1950s, Haldeman-Julius balanced personal profit with a desire for ideological influence. He created a network of readers who looked to him, and to his works, for answers to a wide variety of questions. His catalogue provided tools for personal advancement, a forum through which readers could express themselves, and an opportunity for readers to interact with the publisher and other authors. Haldeman-Julius also published benign self-help manuals, joke books, and classic fiction at an affordable price. His publications and editorials gave him much greater latitude than Chester Franklin or William Lindsay White to proclaim his controversial views. Because he did not count on a geographically insulated

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<sup>1</sup> Milton Rippey to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. 7 May 1951. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

audience or a single publication for profits, Haldeman-Julius believed his readers could pick and choose which aspects of his offerings they wished to purchase and that he could count on ideological unity among his readers to ensure a sympathetic reception. Unrestrained by researchers, editors, or the need to placate advertisers, Haldeman-Julius was free to express his radical opinions on a wide variety of topics.

As the public sphere nationalized, Haldeman-Julius's controversial positions drew increasing attention from outsiders including the federal government. His political and social views placed him outside the cultural mainstream and increasingly represented a threat to conformity. When Haldeman-Julius entered the public sphere in 1919, it was a rapidly expanding arena that embraced ideological change; by the 1950s, however, legal and moral standards began to increasingly emphasize conformity and the use of regulations that allowed the government to halt the spread of questionable materials.<sup>2</sup> This chapter, by examining the multiple controversies and legal charges that plagued Haldeman-Julius's career, argues that he frequently courted political controversy in order to attract readers. Through an analysis of his son's obscenity conviction in 1963 (the charges had been based on books published by Haldeman-Julius in the 1940s) this chapter further argues that the development of a truly national public sphere required increased tolerance of non-conforming materials. Growing ideological diversity flooded the public sphere with non-conforming viewpoints and American jurisprudence slowly shifted toward the use of national, rather than community, standards to judge and govern impermissible content.

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<sup>2</sup> Paul Starr, *The Creation of the Media: Political Origins of Modern Communications* (New York: Basic Books, 2004) 267-294. Specifically, see pages 293-294 where he details evolving obscenity standards. Also see Elliot Shore, *Talkin' Socialism: J.A. Wayland and the Role of the Press in American Radicalism*. (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1988) 178.

## Early Controversies

The first two decades of the twentieth century witnessed unparalleled growth in the overall number of media outlets. The vast majority of these new publications depended upon the postal service for delivery. Some outlets, such as *Reader's Digest*, expressed essentially a conservative and non-controversial perspective. These publications had little or no trouble ensuring mail delivery. Others, however, like the *Appeal to Reason*, expressed viewpoints so controversial that their delivery often was threatened or denied outright. As attitudes toward socialism and radicalism shifted, postal regulations became a tool for the government to use in its quest to silence radical publications.<sup>3</sup> In fact, the *Appeal to Reason* had already faced legal prosecution prior to Haldeman-Julius's moving to Kansas. In 1906, the paper published scathing editorials by future socialist presidential candidate, Eugene V. Debs. In a manner foreshadowing Haldeman-Julius's vociferous defense of Tom Mooney, Debs's articles challenged the government's right to capture labor leaders, transport them across state lines, and put them on trial for murder based upon riots that occurred during a strike. In response to what *Appeal's* then-editor Fred Warren alleged amounted to legalized kidnapping, the paper ran headlines which offering a reward for the kidnapping of its political opponents. Historian David Sterling asserted that though President Roosevelt became incensed at both the tone, and popularity, of Debs's articles, "No congressional legislation then existed to prosecute Debs or to deprive the *Appeal* of access to the United States mails."<sup>4</sup> Sterling's argument that restrictive legislation did not exist rests upon the fact that Debs's articles concerned labor and the legal actions of the federal

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<sup>3</sup> Shore, 178-179. Additionally, Shore asserts that "it is difficult to prove whether they were revoked for political reasons, but the various regulations that went with those rates were changed often during those years and caught the *Appeal* in violation several times." The same could also be said of the various periodicals published by Haldeman-Julius including *Haldeman-Julius Monthly*, *Haldeman-Julius Weekly*, the *American Freeman*, the *Freeman*, and *Critic and Guide*.

<sup>4</sup> David Sterling, "The Federal Government vs. the *Appeal to Reason*," *Kansas History* 9 (Spring 1986): 32-33.

government. In other words, they were political speech protected under the First Amendment. In contrast, threats and a call to kidnap public officials, which had been published in the paper's headlines and its subscription cards, did not warrant First Amendment protection because they could incite violence. Sterling explained that, as a result, government officials arrested Fred Warren and in 1909 he received a six-month sentence and a fine of \$1,500.<sup>5</sup>

Despite the conviction of Warren, the lack of overt legislation regarding political speech left the government searching for a reliable mechanism to curtail the *Appeal to Reason*. In 1911, laws governing the spread of indecent material through U.S. mail were used to silence a series of expose articles the *Appeal* published regarding conditions in Leavenworth prison. Over the next six years, the government dug into the dealings of the *Appeal*, its personnel, and the process through which the series regarding Leavenworth had been produced.<sup>6</sup> Ultimately, in 1917, as a result of sedition laws which had stiffened during World War I, "the *Appeal to Reason* was denied its second-class mailing privileges under Title XII of the Espionage Act."<sup>7</sup> Without access to postal service, the paper faced a daunting task of continuing distribution. This same government tactic, however, would not have worked on a publication that did not rely heavily upon the U.S. Postal Service for distribution. Both Chester Franklin and William Lindsay White, for example, used their community newspapers to challenge local and national issues. Both routinely authored editorials that incensed powerful political figures. Neither, however, relied upon the mail for distribution, and the fluctuation or flat denial of affordable mailing rates could not be used as an effective tool to silence their publications.

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<sup>5</sup> Sterling, 34.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid. Sterling uses several letters to illuminate the government's case and the depictions of sodomy occurring in the prison. Particularly interesting is the fact that Jacob I. Sheppard represents the paper during this period because he will also serve as Haldeman-Julius's lawyer during the draft controversy. Sterling also floats the possibility of prosecutorial misconduct through witness tampering and the manufacture of evidence against the paper on the part of government officials.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 42. Also see Shore, 179. "Second-class mailing privileges, which made possible the building of immense circulations, were granted at the discretion of the postmaster."

The controversy that had engulfed the *Appeal to Reason* undoubtedly influenced Haldeman-Julius, who purchased the paper in 1919. In addition, Haldeman-Julius personally faced local controversy shortly after his purchase. As America mobilized for war, young men across the country were required to register and make themselves eligible for military service. Haldeman-Julius was no exception. His draft status, however, became a source of controversy within the local community and caused tension among political rivals. Newton D. Baker, Secretary of War, wrote to J. I. Shepperd, Haldeman-Julius's attorney, explaining that "I took up his case and have discovered from the records of the Local and District Boards that Mr. Julius claimed exemption on the ground of the dependency of his family, and also on the ground of agricultural labor." After further scrutiny by the draft board, Haldeman-Julius's protected status was revoked and he was returned to the pool of draftable men. Baker told Shepperd that the "Local Board . . . found that his wife and child were independent and that he himself, while taking an interest in the management of his daughter's farm, was not indispensable to its successful operation."<sup>8</sup>

Haldeman-Julius appealed to Baker on his own behalf, explaining that since he had filed his initial questionnaire, he had become a business owner and that his wife, Marcet, was unable to run the business due to the ages of their children. He stated, "I said in view of the fact that my daughter was then only five or six months old that it was impossible for my wife to take care of her business interests." Moreover, "Since then my status has changed inasmuch as I have become an owner of the New Appeal (published here in Girard) and for this reason I was forced to give

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<sup>8</sup> Newton D. Baker to Mr. J. I. Sheppard, 27 July 1918. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.



up my work on the farm.”<sup>9</sup> Marcet attributed the controversy to a misunderstanding of the family’s financial situation. She asserted

Manuel never misrepresented the facts. I am sure that is what his local enemies here have tried to show that he has done. It is always difficult to state exactly what one is worth. Manuel took things at their par value. For instance – He placed our bank stock at \$25,200 – its par value. It is true that stock is worth at least \$200 a share were we to sell it. As we own control we could undoubtedly get more for it did just the right person wish to buy it. But he was certainly not misrepresenting when he figured it at par. His questionnaire stated that he and I and the baby had \$100,000. I think he divided it three ways \$40,000 in my name, 40,000 in the baby’s - - to whom our large farm was entailed by my mother, and \$20,000 to himself, as certain stocks are in his name.”<sup>10</sup>

At the core of the controversy was the issue of influence. Many in Pittsburg and Girard believed that Haldeman-Julius had tried to use his reputation to escape the draft. To combat this notion, attorney J. I. Shepperd issued a statement on July 20, 1918, which appeared in the *Pittsburg Sun* and clarified Haldeman-Julius’s intention to cooperate with the draft. It seems to have worked, since Marcet wrote a friend that “after reading this statement practically everyone calmed down as they had been angry chiefly because they thought we had made misrepresentations.” Yet, Shepperd’s explanation did not satisfy everyone. Marcet explained that “there is a little group here who for personal and political reasons have made up their minds that Manuel is a go. They will leave no stone unturned.”<sup>11</sup>

To alleviate any questions regarding his loyalty, Haldeman-Julius emphasized his willingness to fight in a letter to Newton Baker. He asserted that “I want to serve my country and if my country wants me to serve in the army I shall do so without a moment’s hesitation. But if my country feels that it is not necessary to call out fathers and husbands at this time then I feel

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<sup>9</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Newton D. Baker, 2 August 1918. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

<sup>10</sup> Marcet Haldeman-Julius to Mr. Klein, 27 July 27 1918. Haldeman, Mrs. SA MSS. Collection, Lily Library, University of Indiana. I have corrected a couple of typos which appear in the original letter. Instead of “true” Marcet had written “ture” and instead of “buy” she had written “but”. Haldeman-Julius’s lack of accounting prowess foreshadowed his conviction on charges of tax evasion in 1951, which also centered on inaccurate classification of assets.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

justified in asking that I be returned to Class 2.”<sup>12</sup> The controversy subsided as the local board placed Haldeman-Julius back into Class I, meaning he was eligible to be drafted, but he did not get pressed into either combat or non-combat military service.<sup>13</sup>

The combination of political controversies, which plagued the *Appeal* in the previous decade, and the dustup with the local draft board demonstrated to Haldeman-Julius the need to walk a fine line between controversial rabble-rousing and benign prose.<sup>14</sup> It also proved that southeast Kansas residents were a fickle, unreliable audience. As detailed in Chapter one, Haldeman-Julius manufactured a community of readers through mass marketing and mail-order. Haldeman-Julius’s periodicals and books relied on the postal service for distribution and continuously challenged social norms. His desire to market nationally and challenge the establishment, while maintaining acceptance in order to use postal shipment, stood in stark contrast to other media figures. Chester Franklin, for example, geared his publication expressly toward the local community and sought to unify a local audience. He avoided dramatic and direct challenges to establishment values in order to promote African Americans ability to emulate white society. Haldeman-Julius differed from William Lindsay White in that White, though a social critic, was not ultimately responsible for the editorial policy of *Reader’s Digest*, and the *Emporia Gazette* served a geographically unified community and population that largely identified with White.

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<sup>12</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Newton D. Baker, 2 August 1918. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. The impact of this controversy would linger. For example, see: Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Jack Benjamin 24 August 1949. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.. Haldeman-Julius writes that “I wonder if Smith realizes that I could raise hell with him because of that editorial that pictures me as a slacker? . . . it’s libelous to call a man a draft dodger when the facts show that he registered under the terms of the selective service board and was placed in Class 2 by the draft board, where he awaited a call that never came.”

<sup>13</sup> In contrast, Louis Kopelin, prior editor of the *Appeal to Reason*, did get drafted. He served as part of a propaganda mission among Eastern European socialists. See “Kopelin Mission to Italy and France,” *Pittsburg Sun*. June 18, 1918. Kopelin’s absence paved the way for Haldeman-Julius to assume increased authority over the company and its publishing efforts.

<sup>14</sup> This coincides with the switch from an opposition to World War I in the pages of the *Appeal to Reason* and Haldeman-Julius’s endorsement of Wilsonian policies after purchasing the paper.

## Further Controversy

Within Haldeman-Julius's *American Freeman* newspaper and his voluminous book catalog, particular issues and titles often singled out specific groups for criticism and, as a result, angered segments of his readership. The need to ensure shipment, however, did not curtail his rabble-rousing. Haldeman-Julius published scathing critiques lambasting President Herbert Hoover's poor relationship with mine workers, penchant for crony capitalism, and overall corrupt persona.<sup>15</sup> In response to Haldeman-Julius's vitriolic criticism the government repeatedly denied his paper access to postal shipment. Rather than a direct assault on the second-class shipping rates, a tactic previously used, in 1932 government officials insisted that the *Appeal to Reason* could only be mailed to paying customers. Unable to accurately account for all subscribers, since the paper only kept yearly subscribers' subscription cards "for 60 days and then destroy[ed] them," this vastly limited the paper's distribution, Haldeman-Julius's standard practice was to sell a bundle of fifty papers for a dollar and encourage readers to distribute them among themselves; the company could distribute fifty copies with a single stamp.

In response to stringent postal regulation enforcement, Haldeman-Julius galvanized his readers against the "censorship," urged their increased financial contributions during the period of diminished sales, and eventually produced "more than 100,000 signatures of responsible men and women in every state of the union that affirm they had paid for the paper with their own money." Additionally, Haldeman-Julius cleverly "ordered bundles of copies of the St. Louis *Globe-Democrat*, the *Kansas City Journal*, and several well-known western Republican newspapers. When the bundles arrived in Girard, the postmaster observed the stamps were not affixed, as required under the new rule and held the papers for postage." Upon alerting the proprietors that their publications were held up, however, Haldeman-Julius reported that "their

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<sup>15</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. *American Freeman*. February 1932.

Washington representatives raised a mighty objection to the action of the postmaster at Girard. The rule was immediately rescinded.”<sup>16</sup> Thus, postal officials begrudgingly acquiesced and restored access to second-class shipping of both individual copies and bundles. The controversy surrounding postal distribution of newspapers highlights several recurring issues within the career of Haldeman-Julius. First, it underscores that radical political speech often created controversies that negatively impacted Haldeman-Julius’s access to the public sphere and reputation. Second, in response to controversy, Haldeman-Julius turned to his community of readers for monetary contributions. Finally, the controversy highlights the poor record keeping at the Girard plant.

Additionally, two 1940s publications brought federal scrutiny upon Haldeman-Julius. The book series *The Black International* by Joseph McCabe and Bertrand Russell came under fire for its condemnation of the structure of Catholicism, the divided loyalties of priests, and the cozy relationship between the Vatican and fascists. Haldeman-Julius told Bertrand Russell that “today I was visited by two F.B.I. men who told me that THE BLACK INTERNATIONAL is offensive to many Catholics and that its publication is causing controversy in these difficult times.” He further explained that “I can’t go into all the facts, but suffice it to say that I promised to cut out all advertisements of the pamphlets, including circulars, etc.”<sup>17</sup> This cooperation, however, did not mean that Haldeman-Julius distanced himself from the ideological underpinnings of the series. He stated, “I know the pamphlets are excellent works, that the history is straight and viewpoint correct, but I felt it better to be the compromiser.”<sup>18</sup> With war once again exacerbating domestic tension, and Haldeman-Julius once again facing federal scrutiny over material being

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<sup>16</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, “Post Office Denies the Mails,” *American Freeman*, March 19, 1932.

<sup>17</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Bertrand Russell. 19 August 1942. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid.

shipped via U.S. mail, he found merit in acquiescence. He dropped *The Black International* from catalogs for a while and feigned accommodation, in 1950 Haldeman-Julius told author Jack Benjamin that in an upcoming issue of the *Freeman* “[I] calmly call attention to the 19 Black International titles still in my list.”<sup>19</sup>

The 1948 release of Little Blue Book #730, *The F.B.I. – The Basis of an American Police State* by Clifton Bennett, attracted the attention of federal officials. Bennett asserted, among other things, that J. Edgar Hoover used the bureau as a mechanism to enforce personal vendettas, did not answer to government oversight, and was a “Gestapo in knee-pants.” He also alleged that interrogation practices of the F.B.I. routinely violated standards of human decency.<sup>20</sup> Following a cease and desist letter personally signed by Hoover, Haldeman-Julius agreed to pull the book from circulation with relatively little fight. He deflected responsibility for the book’s content, however, and replied that “I accepted Mr. Bennett’s manuscript in good faith, with the impression that he knew his subject. I am now convinced that he did not do a workmanlike job. This hurts my pride as an editor, but that is nothing compared to . . . issuing material that cannot stand up.”<sup>21</sup>

Haldeman-Julius’s flimsy explanation did not appease Hoover, and the following week the publisher received a letter from Hoover explaining that “while I appreciate your action in this instance, nevertheless this does not entirely undo the grave injustice of giving this scurrilous

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<sup>19</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Jack Benjamin, 24 March 1950. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

<sup>20</sup> Clifton Bennett, *The F. B. I.- The Basis of an American Police State: The Alarming Methods of J. Edgar Hoover* (Girard, KS: Haldeman-Julius Publications, 1948), 12-25. For a general overview of Hoover’s F. B. I. see Richard Gid Powers, *Secrecy and Power: The Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York, NY: The Free Press, 1987). Also, for an examination of Hoover’s personal proclivities see Curt Gentry, *J. Edgar Hoover: The Man and the Secrets* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1991) or Anthony Summers, *The Secret Life of J. Edgar Hoover* (New York, NY: Simon & Schuster, 1993).

<sup>21</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to J. Edgar Hoover. 23 July 1948. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

writing the imprint of your publishing house.”<sup>22</sup> Hoover wrote Haldeman-Julius again on February 4, 1949, regarding the continued distribution of Bennett’s book. Hoover alleged that he had been told by “a person who order[ed] some books from your firm early this month advising me that he received with his order several pamphlets one of which was an advertisement for the article ‘The F.B.I. – The Basis of an American Police State.’”<sup>23</sup> The continued advertisement of Bennett’s book likely stemmed from Haldeman-Julius’s practice of printing a large number of catalogs well in advance and sending them out as orders were placed. When the cease and desist letter came from Hoover in 1948, the catalogs had already been printed. The incident demonstrates the increasing scrutiny upon Haldeman-Julius’s book business and the content of his publications. Universally distributing identical book catalogs, including controversial titles like *Black International* and *F. B. I.* exposed the full range of Haldeman-Julius’s radical offerings to all of his readers and undercut the ideological unanimity he might have expected from his newspaper subscribers. By failing to carefully tailor his political message to each group of readers, Haldeman-Julius jeopardized his connection to the public sphere and the audience he had created.

### **Haldeman-Julius’s Poor Accounting**

Beyond the content of his publications, the personal accounting practices of Haldeman-Julius also led to controversy and, ultimately, conviction. Indicted by a grand jury on March 22, 1950, Haldeman-Julius “was charged with evasion of about \$65,000 in income taxes for 1944,

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<sup>22</sup> J. Edgar Hoover to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius. 30 July 1948. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

<sup>23</sup> J. Edgar Hoover to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, 4 February 1949. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

1945, 1946, and 1947.”<sup>24</sup> He explained his circumstances to an inquisitive reporter by telling him that cash purchases had been the norm and “while not strictly according to the methods of certified accountants, it worked. The Treasury Department always got its cut.” The character letter submitted by Rippey, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, explained that one of the crimes Haldeman-Julius had been accused of – endorsing checks he received and then sending them to a third party – represented common practice within the industry.<sup>25</sup> Haldeman-Julius could not fully account for his income because some of it went directly to vendors and “for some years cash was accumulated to put up a building on the lot next to the plant and repair the old one. Contractors were called in. The money was there, ready to be spent, when it was taken by robbers.”<sup>26</sup> Despite these explanations, the case hinged upon a close examination of his finances. An audit in 1950 found, in addition to grossly underreported income, that “you have made out your own returns and they are almost wholly inadequate and do not conform to any standard of reporting.”<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Daniel M. Dwyer to Mr. Clay Fulke, 28 May 28, 1948. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. Specifically, Dwyer asks about a check Fulke had sent to Haldeman-Julius on August 5, 1947 in the amount of \$1,000. Additionally, see Chas C. Everitt to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, 26 April 1950. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. Everitt had been asked to produce a complete documentation of Haldeman-Julius’s finances. Two key points emerged in this audit; first, that “we did not find any office record of receipts, either daily, monthly, or annually.” Also, there were records of cash being received but neither deposited nor able to be accounted for by Haldeman-Julius. Haldeman-Julius partially attributed the missing cash to a robbery of the plant in 1948. For the indictment of Haldeman-Julius see “Haldeman-Julius is Indicted,” *New York Times*, March 23, 1950. No direct evidence exists that the prosecution of Haldeman-Julius on tax charges, or his son on obscenity charges, stemmed from a personal vendetta on the part of J. Edgar Hoover. The previous animus between Haldeman-Julius and Hoover coupled with Hoover’s fixation on issues of sexual impropriety, however, certainly establishes a circumstantial linkage.

<sup>25</sup> Milton Rippey to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, 7 May 1951. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. Also see Clayton Fulks to Arthur J. Mellott, 7 May 1951. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas..

<sup>26</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to Westbrook Pegler, 13 July 1951. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. See: “\$40,000 Burglary Confessed,” *New York Times*, April 11, 1951,

<sup>27</sup> Chas C. Everitt to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, 26 April 1950. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

Haldeman-Julius contracted with Douglas Hudson, a lawyer based in Fort Scott, for the duration of his tax troubles.<sup>28</sup> As he had in past controversies, Haldeman-Julius continued to rely on reader support and to utilize his customer list as a mechanism for raising money. He disseminated contribution cards along with his book catalogs and told readers “[I] have a good lawyer. Paid him retainer and must raise balance in a hurry. Hope you will be able to help in this crisis. Send as much as you can spare, Thanks.” In June, 1950, he explained that

Your help in the strange income tax case was appreciated. Money spent while out in the field in search of articles for *The Freeman* and payments of more than \$1,000 to lawyers mean the time has come to meet the problem of more funds. Before long \$1750 more will have to be paid to lawyers. I request support to do their best with immediate and generous donations. Thanks in advance. The situation is serious. We all must do our best.<sup>29</sup>

Because ideological political speech was not the source of this controversy, little editorial space in the *American Freeman* was dedicated to explaining the ongoing legal struggle. In a fundraising letter to his readers, Haldeman-Julius described the verdict to as returned by a jury that was “long split 6 to 6,” before finding him guilty on two of the four charges of tax evasion, despite the fact that “the same transactions were made in all four years.”<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, his conviction and the resulting financial penalties threatened to ruin his reputation and the financial standing of the company he created.

### **Continuing the Business**

Though Haldeman-Julius Publishing prospered throughout the 1940s, Haldeman-Julius’s tax conviction, and his mysterious death, which followed soon after, threw the company into

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<sup>28</sup> Douglas Hudson to Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, 23 April 1951. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.. This agreement covered an initial hearing, the possibility of a negotiated settlement, and an appeal.

<sup>29</sup> Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to “Dear Friend.” Undated. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*



jeopardy.<sup>31</sup> In 1951, the company's ownership passed to Sue Haldeman, his second wife, and Henry Haldeman, the son of Emanuel and Marcet. Sue had been an employee at the plant prior to Haldeman-Julius's death. Henry's life changed forever when he assumed control of the 3,000-titles publication catalog.<sup>32</sup> Unlike his father, Henry was not a socialist activist, a rabble-rousing proponent of free thought, and or an agenda-driven publisher. He had grown up in Girard, attended the University of Kansas, and served in the Air Force during World War II. By 1951, he had settled into life as a commercial airline pilot in California. In 1951 the *American Freeman* ended publication but Sue and Henry both expressed a desire to continue publishing the existing book catalog. Sue explained to author Upton Sinclair that "Henry, and I plan to continue the business pending the outcome with the internal revenue dept. I believe it will be settled soon and that they will cooperate to the fullest extent." She added that going forward she "would like to see the work of Emanuel go on and on forever as sort of a perpetual monument to him."<sup>33</sup>

As the company transitioned to new ownership, however, Sue and Henry began liquidated stock and advertised rock-bottom prices. A September 1951 advertisement in the *Chicago Tribune* proclaimed "the Little Blue Book Man is Gone!!" and "his Heirs Must Reduce Taxable Inventory." It urged customers to buy early because "many Books Now in Stock Will Not Be Reprinted – They Could Become Collector's Items. This May Be Your Last Chance to Take Your Pick of the World-Famous Little Blue Books at the Closing-Out Bargain Price of

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<sup>31</sup> "Publisher Drowns in Swimming Pool," *New York Times*, August 1, 1951. Still reeling from his conviction, the circumstances surrounding Haldeman-Julius's death led some to believe that his drowning in the backyard pool was suicide.

<sup>32</sup> *U.S. v. Henry J. Haldeman*, T-CR-298, 1963. United States District Court for District of Kansas. Record Group 21, National Archives Central Plains Region (Kansas City). 44-52.

<sup>33</sup> Sue Haldeman to Upton Sinclair, 16 August 1951. Haldeman, Mrs. SA MSS. Collection, Lily Library, University of Indiana. For the settlement of tax charges, see "Publisher's Tax Sliced," *New York Times*, August 17, 1954.

Only 5c Each Plus 1c per Book for Carriage, Etc. (Minimum Order – 20 Books).”<sup>34</sup> The advertisement further stated the intentions of the company. It read:

E. Haldeman-Julius, renowned publisher of the world-famous Little Blue Books, planned to retire from publishing and devote himself to writing. His untimely death marked the end of an era and occurred before he could accomplish his purpose. His heirs expect this advertising campaign to clear the shelves of most of the books on hand and it is their intention to withdraw many titles when the present supply is sold out.<sup>35</sup>

The need to liquidate quickly came not only from a desire to capitalize on the company’s increased publicity and to stave off the financial implications of the tax charges. Henry explained to author Frank Swancara in 1952 that “the government’s claim is still pending, and goodness only knows when it will finally be disposed of. We have it pending now in the Court of Tax and Appeals at Washington, D.C. Of course, if allowed in full it will eat up the entire estate.”<sup>36</sup>

Henry remained committed to the publishing principles of his father in regard to wide access and low prices and maintained the existing publications. He did not make substantial changes to titles published, and continued marketing Little Blue Books via direct mail catalog. In a letter to Upton Sinclair, Henry explained, “We are bringing out a new Big Book Catalog and are considering making all cloth bound books \$1.00. This will help them move better into the hands of the people, off the dusty shelves, and at a practical price considering the competition these days.”<sup>37</sup> The company routinely published the Big Blue Book catalog, essentially all the titles available from Haldeman-Julius Publishing in the form of Little Blue Books. Haldeman routinely sent the Big Blue Catalog to school administrators for ordering and distribution of materials to students, advertised the catalog in various publications for mail order, and sent the

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<sup>34</sup> Advertisement in *Chicago Tribune*. September 30, 1951. Haldeman-Julius Family Papers, Daley Library, University of Illinois-Chicago.

<sup>35</sup> Ibid.

<sup>36</sup> Henry Haldeman to Frank Swancara, 21 January 1952. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. Also, see: *New York Times*, “Haldeman-Julius Found Guilty”, April 19, 1951, Pg. 36. Though the judgment was reduced considerably, the company still had to pay \$90,000.

<sup>37</sup> Henry to Upton Sinclair, 28 May 1958. Haldeman, Mrs. SA MSS. Collection, Lily Library, University of Indiana.

catalog to past customers. Advertisements published in newspapers, magazines, and other periodicals also alerted readers to the Little Blue Books they could order and have shipped directly from Haldeman-Julius Publishing. Once an order had been placed, the customer's information remained on file and Haldeman-Julius periodically sent out catalogs to past customers.

### **Little Blue Books on Trial**

Titles dedicated to spreading frank and reliable information about sexuality appeared in the catalog of books Henry Haldeman inherited from his father. First published in the 1940s, they circumvented the puritanical prohibitions Haldeman-Julius believed prevented Americans from living full and happy lives. To Haldeman-Julius, access to sexual information, an ability to understand individual sexuality, and information needed for good health seemed the right of all Americans. Publishing frank advice, however, challenged prohibitions against the distribution of materials related to sexuality and was often met with widespread condemnation during the mid-twentieth century. Moreover, during the early 1960s, a material's acceptability depended upon the judgment of local communities and individuals on a local jury. In contrast, Haldeman-Julius, as established in Chapter one, depended upon the creation of a national audience of sympathetic readers for his success.

Charges brought by federal attorneys alleged that Henry Haldeman distributed catalogs "which contained printed circulars, advertisements, and notices giving information, directly and indirectly, where, how, from whom and by what means obscene, lewd, lascivious, indecent and filthy booklets and pamphlets might be obtained." The specific works in question consisted of medical author D. O. Cauldwell's discussion of a variety of sexual topics through a question-

and-answer format. According to both Cauldwell's and Haldeman's attorney's writing, these works were designed to dispel rumor and educate on sexual topics. Government attorneys, however, saw their intent differently, and sought to curtail their publication and dispersal. The prosecution of Henry Haldeman was held in the federal courthouse in Topeka, Kansas. Jury members were selected from the local community, and Haldeman's fate rested on how Kansans viewed obscenity.<sup>38</sup> The subsequent appeal, however, represented a change in case law toward a national obscenity standard and confirms that twentieth-century America shifted from a local to national public sphere.

## Sex and Society

Within American society, conflicts over the prominence of sexuality, and sexual information, had been a source of vexing social problems long before Haldeman's trial. As historians John D. Emilio and Estelle B. Friedman argue in *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*, that attitudes toward sexuality have been inextricably linked to larger issues such as the "changing nature of the economy, the family, and politics."<sup>39</sup> Rather than a stagnant, consistent attitude towards sexuality, American society has adhered to a mutable, shifting approach.<sup>40</sup> Repeated battles occurred between factions supporting emerging attitudes which allowed permissibility and acceptability of sexual expression, and those favoring enforcement of older attitudes, which valued restraint, secrecy, and a prohibition of public sexual

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<sup>38</sup> *U.S. v. Henry J. Haldeman*. 44-52. At this point, federal obscenity laws were based upon the Comstock Act (18 U.S.C. 1461) first passed in 1873. Also see James C. N. Paul, and Murray L. Schwartz, *Federal Censorship: Obscenity in the Mail* (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961) 20-24.

<sup>40</sup> John D'Emilio and Estelle B. Friedman, *Intimate Matters: A History of Sexuality in America*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997). xii.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.* Also, 233-235. They argue that the emergence of a new emphasis upon sexuality occurred as a result of the relationship between sexuality and mass marketed consumerism in the 1920s. Additionally, during the early twentieth century an increasingly rebellious youth subculture and acceptance of women's sexuality altered Americans perception of sex but did not coincide with immediate widespread acceptance of new values.

dialogues. Not surprisingly, Haldeman-Julius had sought to influence this evolving approach within the public sphere with the publication of Cauldwell's books.

In twentieth-century America, prohibitions on the expression of sexual attitudes, whether meant to seduce or educate, increasingly became the province of governmental and state power rather than the church or other institutions.<sup>41</sup> This has profoundly impacted the relationship between the individual and the state, as the state became the arbiter of appropriateness and acceptability. As the public sphere expanded so too did the debate over sexuality. Against the backdrop of social change in the 1940s and 1950s, historian Beth Bailey maintains, as Americans increasingly participated in a "larger consumer marketplace" the relationship between private sexual expression and public venue was renegotiated and attempts were made to strengthen the enforcement of the traditional prohibition on sexuality.<sup>42</sup> Central to this debate was the expanding role of sex in popular culture, a role that repeatedly drew the ire of cultural critics who made periodic efforts to curb its spread, and who forced a continual redefinition of obscenity law designed to corral the sexual content of popular culture.

In this climate, the Haldeman case is evidence of a continuing tug of war between individual Americans and a society that seeks to restrict not only their views towards sexuality but also their right to express those views. Throughout the course of the trial, Haldeman's defense team vigorously protested his innocence, asserting that he believed following extensive correspondence with the postal service that mailing the material was acceptable, and that the material in question was not, in fact, obscene. A Kansas jury ultimately convicted Haldeman and sentenced him to prison.

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<sup>41</sup> Ibid., xvii and passim.

<sup>42</sup> Beth Bailey, *Sex in the Heartland* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999) 42.

## Cauldwell and the Catalog

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius's mission had been to spread reliable information to the widest audience possible. Most remembered for his political polemics, he also used his publications to disseminate information pertaining to sexuality. The works Haldeman-Julius published by Cauldwell offered advice and commentary on letters he had received from readers. Cauldwell began his work on pornography, for example, with a discussion of libido, libidinous, obscenity, and what should and should not be forbidden within society. He asserted that the subject of sex demanded in-depth analysis and examination: "Advanced civilization is at last beginning to defy the laws of gravity. It is actually pulling itself by the bootstrap from the filth of the mental gutter." He continued, "Learning that it isn't filthy or obscene to experience libidinous sensations in the pursuit of such actions as are essential to the preservation of the human race."<sup>43</sup> As far as the purpose or role he envisioned for his own work, Cauldwell stated, "The questions in this booklet will indicate to all readers that I would appear inconsistent and positively incongruous in my answers should I adhere strictly to my own frank opinions as to what does and does not constitute obscenity, pornography, etc." He explained, "I've had to write in the language so popularly understood, but I have devoted every effort possible to the purpose of clarifying the cloud of obscurity surrounding the subject."<sup>44</sup> Rather than trying to sensationalize, tantalize, or contribute to the proliferation of obscenity, Cauldwell envisioned his work demystifying sex for America. He noted, "I've entered into a volume of correspondence to explain plain facts to people" and to set straight those "who were misled by stories people have told for the purpose of eroticizing themselves, or to see if they could, by their graphic tales and boastful lies, eroticize

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<sup>54</sup> D. O. Cauldwell, *Questions and Answers about Pornography: The Questions people ask and the truth everybody wants to know. Porne means prostitute and graphy means writing. But theres a lot of difference in the truth and what people popularly think it is* (Girard, KS: Little Blue Book Publications, 1950) 3.

<sup>44</sup> Ibid., 3.

an individual believed to be uninitiated.”<sup>45</sup> He provided an assessment of sexuality that could help the physician and layman alike. Moreover, Cauldwell’s writing provided a community forum dedicated to sexuality in the same manner that Haldeman-Julius’s newspaper provided a political forum for readers. The inclusion of Cauldwell’s works in the Blue Book catalog enhanced Haldeman-Julius’s overall effort to create an ideological community committed to free expression and free thought.

During World War II, D. O. Cauldwell served in various medical capacities following graduation from the National University of Mexico. His wartime experience put him in extensive contact with new recruits through whom he was exposed to the views of American youth toward sex.<sup>46</sup> After the war, Cauldwell accepted the position of letters editor with the periodical *Sexology* and from 1946 to 1959 oversaw the question-and-answer department. *Sexology* catered to the educated layman and featured a common approach towards sexuality. Steering clear of vulgar language, but holding no topic taboo, the magazine allowed Cauldwell to delve into a wide variety of sexual topics.<sup>47</sup> It was a short leap from *Sexology*’s question-and-answer department to the confession-laden books published by Haldeman-Julius. In 1947, Haldeman-Julius published Cauldwell’s *Why Males Wear Female Attire: Strange Stories, Weird Confessions, Historical Data and Scientific Explanations of Transvestitism*. Historian Joanne Meyerowitz notes that throughout the 1940s and 1950s Cauldwell was heavily involved in the investigation of issues surrounding sexuality in general, and transsexuality specifically.<sup>48</sup> Cauldwell’s involvement in groundbreaking theorization about sexuality placed him outside mid-

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<sup>45</sup> Ibid., 4.

<sup>46</sup> Richard Ekins and Dave King. “Pioneers of Transgendering: The Popular Sexology of David O. Cauldwell.” *The International Journal of Transgenderism*. Vol. 5, num.2 April-June 2001, 882.

<sup>47</sup> Ekins and King, 885.

<sup>48</sup> Joanne J. Meyerowitz, *How Sex Changed: A History of Transsexuality in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2002) 42.

twentieth century mainstream American society, but not all of his published work dealt with the subject of transsexuality or transvestitism.

From the mid-1940s to the mid-1950s, Cauldwell published in excess of one hundred individual works through Haldeman-Julius, all of which approached sexual topics in a manner accessible to the common reader, without apprehension or condescension.<sup>49</sup> Haldeman's attorney's described the purpose of Cauldwell's work "to bring sexual enlightenment, and dispel ignorance, bias, guilt, anxiety, frustration, prejudice, and mental illness."<sup>50</sup> Through reliable, medical based, information Cauldwell provided works that were "beneficial in stripping away much of the mystery, hypocrisy, prudery, tension, anxiety and guilt stemming from the Victorian Age."<sup>51</sup> They were designed to inform rather than to stimulate. The government, however, characterized them differently.

### **The Work of Cauldwell**

The format of the each work followed the same basic formula: a reader's question, Cauldwell's answer, and then a brief introductory commentary by Cauldwell prior to next letter. Topics were usually separated by subsection a section title highlighted the subject of the next letter. Letters addressed to Cauldwell covered a variety of topics. In 1950, after visiting the available doctors in his town, a man decided Cauldwell's perspective might be helpful. He wrote, "Dear Doctor: I wonder if you can give me any helpful idea about my trouble?" He explained that "my wife just finished the menopause and her sex desire is better than since we were first married 30 years ago. But, he continued, "my wife's vagina is more like it was when she was

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<sup>49</sup> Ibid., 42.

<sup>50</sup> "Opening Brief for the Appellant," Henry J. Haldeman Collection. Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid., 16.



young than it was before the menopause.” As a result, “when I have an erection (and that comes poorly-partially quickly and then stops and may go entirely away) I’m still too small to give her much satisfaction.”<sup>52</sup> His inability to give pleasure proved less a concern, since “at least my wife knows my organ was not always this small,” than the discovery of “little hard places” in his penis. He explained that though “I can’t tell you just where because when I press they seem to move about. I can press lightly with a finger and thumb and can feel the hardness of finger or thumb with the other with what penis tissue is between them.”<sup>53</sup>

The man pointed out that he was “not asking for any magic-just for information.” Cauldwell responded by addressing the symptoms and suggesting further treatment, indicating that “the description sounds like Peyronie’s disease.” He added that “anyone with such a condition should lose no time in seeing a thoroughly competent urologist. Treatment in time may be effective.” While he proved cognizant of the need for sexual pleasure between the couple, he noted that “it is far more important to think of getting medical help which may result in restoration (early) than to give special thought to the present sex life of either partner to marriage.”<sup>54</sup> Cauldwell’s preliminary diagnosis, and concise recommendation to seek further medical treatment, seems reasonable. Checked against current medical advice, Cauldwell’s information remains remarkably relevant.<sup>55</sup> By approaching the man’s problem without pretense, or subjecting him to a potentially embarrassing physical examination, Cauldwell was able to demystify the ailment and alleviate confusion.

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<sup>52</sup> D. O. Cauldwell, *Questions and Answers on Sex Psyhique Disparity: Are Males and Females Critically Mismatched in their Genital Proportions? How can Sex Physique Disparity be Overcome? Unrecognized Facts about Sex Physique, the Sex life, Relationship, etc.* (Girard, KS: Little Blue Book Publications, 1950) 24.

<sup>53</sup> Ibid.

<sup>54</sup> D. O. Cauldwell, *Questions and Answers on Sex Physique Disparity: Are Males and Females Critically Mismatched in their Genital Proportions? How can Sex Physique Disparity be Overcome? Unrecognized Facts about Sex Physique, the Sex life, Relationship, etc.* (Girard, KS: Little Blue Book Publications, 1950). 24

<sup>60</sup> [www.webmd.com](http://www.webmd.com) search “Peyronie’s disease,” December 14, 2008. The description of symptoms listed on the site seems consistent with those of the man writing to Cauldwell. The recommendation of Cauldwell to seek further medical treatment is the best given to a man in his situation.

Not all of Cauldwell's texts covered physical maladies; others delved into perception and psychological issues. In his work titled *Questions and Answers about Pornography*, letters include references to obscene materials and their impact upon people, where to find pornography (Cauldwell directs the person to their own mind), how to deal with a desire for pornography, and related topics. One of the initial letters, which is rather indicative of the entirety of the work, came from a minister concerned about his and his wife's interest in obscene photographs, drawings, and stories. The minister asked, "Just what is there wrong about all this? And why do my wife and I (and other people who are intelligent above the average level) find these pictures that are called obscene and this writing which is branded pornographic so stimulating?"<sup>56</sup> While he acknowledged that "we [he and his wife] know that the stories we read either are the machinations of a clever mind or a thoroughly ignorant mind and that the same applies to the art work," he inquired "why do intelligent people condemn pornographic works? Are we, despite our high social standing and high I.Q. rating, sexual degenerates? Why are the supposedly dirtiest words describing sex in all its aspects so stimulating to us when we indulge in sexual exercises?"<sup>57</sup> Again, the question-and-answer format of Cauldwell's work allowed an individual to ask an embarrassing question anonymously.

Cauldwell's answer focused upon the universality of an attraction and fascination with pornography. He writes, "Dear. Mr. \_\_\_\_\_: All that you described in your letter is not as unusual as you probably were impressed in that you, being social-minded, centered your questions on your individual situation." Cauldwell explained that in terms of whether or not the couples are "sexual degenerates," clearly they are not. He asserted, "It takes a great deal more than is involved to make a sexual degenerate of anyone" and he further acknowledged that "there

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<sup>56</sup> D. O. Cauldwell, *Questions and Answers about Pornography*, 8.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid. 8-9.

are many degenerates, but their sexual acts and sexual lives do not make them so.” Cauldwell told the couple that in no instance “should sex practices be branded as degenerate simply because degenerate people run afoul of the laws of the state, society, and even church, by being careless about their sexual acts or by molesting other people sexually because they are degenerate.”<sup>58</sup> Finally, he explained that the couple is attracted to drawings and stories that are pornographic in nature due to their first encounters with sexuality. He claimed “It is seldom that any child under 12, or in the teens, has sex experience, or experiences sexual pleasure except when his (or her) initiation involves the common words usually labeled as dirty.” As a result, “when children reach a certain social status . . . they adopt the social speech most acceptable, become guarded in their use of the so-called vulgar expressions and become loud voices to the contrary notwithstanding, more inhibited sexually.”<sup>59</sup> Through this adoption of appropriate language, the ability to articulate desire and sexual fulfillment is lost. Thus, when man and wife “enter marriage and find themselves availed of the privilege of practically illimitable sexual life because it cannot be associated with the expressions and descriptions they first learned.”<sup>60</sup> In other words, visual depictions, which Cauldwell described as being almost the lingua franca of children’s sexual expression, have been deemed off limits to mature adult society and caused the couple to consider themselves delinquents.

While it certainly took a more permissive attitude than most publications in 1950, at no point did Cauldwell’s work delve into fictional sensationalism. His text supported the couple and a belief that sexuality was best left out of legal definitions, so long as an individual did no damage to others. Cauldwell’s frank reply and willingness to engage the topic clearly presented an alternative to the confinement and condemnation placed upon sexual enjoyment by dominant

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<sup>58</sup> D. O. Cauldwell, *Questions and Answers about Pornography*, 8-9.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

<sup>60</sup> Ibid.

media. His attempt to combine medical information about the development of adult sexuality within a format and language that average individuals could understand echoed the goal of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius to expand knowledge and Americans' access to information.

### **Henry Haldeman and Cauldwell**

After Henry Haldeman inherited the catalog from his father, he continued its publication and its successful marketing strategies as well. When a customer ordered a book, the order was filled and shipped along with a catalog for future orders. Works that dealt with sexuality, such as Cauldwell's, were separated by subsections in the catalog. Thus, a customer who ordered a Blue Book on birth control by Margaret Sanger received back the same catalog as a customer who ordered a joke book. At times, the company created a catalog geared specifically to certain audiences, such as the "Little Blue Catalog" which omitted the works on sex and marketed books specifically to children.<sup>61</sup> Henry testified during his trial that "I wanted to make a mailing to doctors dealing with sex books specifically." Thus, "I went through the catalog . . . and selected all of the books that were related to the subject of 'sex'. I then compiled them into one brochure and made a mailing to quite a few thousand doctors."<sup>62</sup> Haldeman's ability to compile such a mailing indicates that a significant number of titles in the Big Blue Catalog dealt with the topic of sex, but also that the catalog included a vast array of subjects and necessitated a more focused list. The ability to offer Little Blue Books on a wide variety of subjects and ship directly to customers circumvented the filter of retail and greatly expanded Haldeman-Julius's ability to communicate with his audience. However, the marketing practices of Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, which had been established to expand access to the public sphere and manufacture the largest

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<sup>61</sup> *U.S. v. Henry J. Haldeman*, 268.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*, 53-54.

audience possible, ultimately brought about his son's obscenity charges. Similar to controversies surrounding postal distribution of the *American Freeman*, the government accusations rested as much on distribution as on content.

The specific titles that led to the arrest of Henry J. Haldeman were: *Questions and Answers Involving Sexual Ethic and Esthetics*, *Questions and Answers about Cunnilingus*, *Questions and Answers on Sex Life and Sexual Problems of Homosexuals of Both Sexes*, *Question and Answers on Sex and the American Attitude*, and *Questions and Answers about Orogenital Contacts*. While only selected titles were specifically listed in the indictment, the government referenced "others of a similar character by D. D.O. Cauldwell." Thus, the entirety of Cauldwell's works originally published by Haldeman-Julius Publishing was under attack.<sup>63</sup> The government's indictment also included the publishing company's catalog, due to its inclusion of the aforementioned titles and the directions given to the public to purchase obscene materials.

### **Obscenity Law and the Prosecution of Haldeman**

A complex and changeable web of legal regulations governed obscenity in the 1960s and rested primarily upon the government's desire to prevent dissemination of obscene materials. Early American obscenity standards had rested upon the notion that local populations had the authority to determine what constituted obscenity.<sup>64</sup> The standards were significantly updated in *United States v. Roth* (1956) when the court separated a publisher's actions from the material

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<sup>63</sup> *U.S. v. Henry J. Haldeman*, 265.

<sup>64</sup> Frederick Schauer, *The Law of Obscenity* (Washington D. C., The Bureau of National Affairs, 1976), 15. For example, 1879's *United States v. Bennett* not only concluded "that selected parts of a book can be foundation for a determination of obscenity" but also "that a work is obscene if it tended to 'deprave and corrupt' those who had access to it." Regardless of the type of person the material was aimed at, or the level of complicity they had in thinking obscene thoughts, *Bennett* held that if the work could cause obscene thoughts in anyone, the overall work must be condemned.

produced. In this case, the court ruled that “judging obscenity by the effect of isolated passages upon the most susceptible persons might well encompass material legitimately treating sex.”<sup>65</sup> As a result, mid-twentieth-century American obscenity law accepted a view that not only could publications be examined by courts for their literary merit, but also that the totality of their content and intent of the individual involved mattered greatly.<sup>66</sup> Legal opinion resulting from the *Roth* case set forth the notion that only those publications that portrayed “sex in a manner appealing to prurient interest” fall under obscenity standards.<sup>67</sup> The concept of “prurient interest” played a large role in the Haldeman trial, as the prosecution attempted to show that Cauldwell’s works could stimulate the minds of his readers and, as a result, should be barred from public access.

The prosecuting attorney in the Haldeman case was Newell A. George, originally from Kansas City, Missouri. He had studied law at George Mason University and remained in Washington, D. C. after graduation. George, a Democrat, served in a variety of governmental capacities, both elected and appointed, from the 1930s into the 1950s. He was appointed U.S. attorney by John F. Kennedy in 1961 following a loss in the Kansas congressional race and served seven years, some of them in the Robert F. Kennedy-led Justice Department, which proved to be a tireless opponent of perceived evil within society.<sup>68</sup> As Attorney General, Kennedy quickly gained a reputation belying the compassionate persona for which he has mostly been remembered.<sup>69</sup> The 1960s witnessed a heated battle between forces intent on maintaining standards prohibiting the proliferation of sexuality within society and champions of increased

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid., 33. Also see: Leon Friedman, ed. *Obscenity: The Complete Oral Arguments before the Supreme Court in the Major Obscenity Cases*. (New York: Chelsea House Publishers, 1970). 63.

<sup>66</sup> Schauer, 27.

<sup>67</sup> Friedman, 63.

<sup>68</sup> “Introduction of Legislation Designating the Newell George Post Office in Kansas City, KS.” Dennis Moore. Congressional Record. Extensions of Remarks, E654. April 27, 2004.

<sup>69</sup> Joseph A. Palermo, *In his Own Right: The Political Odyssey of Senator Robert F. Kennedy*. (New York: Columbia University Press, 2001). 26-27.

permissibility and information dissemination. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius had championed rationalism, free thinking, and individual autonomy throughout America. Unlike the controversies surrounding postal access, the obscenity charges could not be overcome by galvanizing the company's base of customers. Instead, the trial of Henry Haldeman depended upon the judgment of the same Kansans that Emanuel had sought to bypass through mass marketing and mail order.

The government's case against Haldeman centered mostly on the catalog of Haldeman-Julius Publishing and the method through which orders were filled and the catalogs were distributed. The only witness called by the prosecution, Girard postmaster Richard A. Carpenter, testified that on several occasions he had notified Henry J. Haldeman of prohibitions against mailing obscene material. Under direct examination, Carpenter read from a letter forwarded from government officials to Haldeman in 1956: "I have been advised by the solicitor, Post Office Department . . . as follows: 'Unless and until further instructed, the following books should not be refused transmission.'" This letter identified works by D.O. Cauldwell specifically, but also stated that "it is understood, of course, that full responsibility for any violations of law that might result from the acceptance of the above books will rest with the mailer."<sup>70</sup> Rather than establishing that the books were mailed in direct violation of the law, George established that the responsibility for knowing whether the books could be mailed or not rested with Haldeman, not the Post Office. Before leaving the stand, Carpenter described the process of holding and releasing the books in question. He indicated that the possibility of mailing the books existed, but that the letter releasing the books "did not go into whether or not they might be possibly

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<sup>70</sup> *U.S. v. Henry J. Haldeman*, 8.

obscene.”<sup>71</sup> Thus, the Post Office had initially held the books, but then released a few at a time, placing the burden upon Haldeman to self-censor or risk obscenity charges.

In addition to the postmaster of Girard, George subpoenaed postmasters, educators, and corporate executives throughout the country in order to demonstrate the extent to which Haldeman’s company made Cauldwell’s books available. Though these witnesses provided affidavits to the Grand Jury, the prosecution rested its case after the testimony of Carpenter. Additionally, the prosecution provided the jury with copies of Cauldwell’s work. The unused witnesses, however, are indicative of the prosecution’s desire to condemn the spread of Cauldwell’s work via the mail as well as the audience to which Haldeman had marketed the texts. Clearly, the dissemination of Cauldwell’s work, as much as its content, constituted Haldeman’s crime.

### **“Community” reaction**

Works similar to Cauldwell’s, both in terms of medical approach and sexually charged content, were rather common in 1950s America. More specifically, they were common in 1950s Kansas. The testimony of Joseph Rubenstein, University of Kansas librarian, brought to light a variety of nonfiction and fiction works available in the University’s Watson Library that covered similar topics.<sup>72</sup> Rubenstein also acknowledged “everything in Cauldwell’s publications is covered in the Kinsey – in both Kinsey Reports.”<sup>73</sup> While material in Watson Library and the Kinsey reports was available to the general public, Haldeman attorney Sam Crow hired Frederick

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid., 14.

<sup>72</sup> *U.S. v. Henry J. Haldeman*. 96-166. Rubenstein read from *Sexual Deviation* by Doctor’s Louis S. London and Frank S. Caprio published in 1950; “he also continued sexual relations with her brother’s friends, and they referred to the vagina as the top hole and the rectum as the bottom hole” and “on one occasion she requested that her brother urinate in her vagina, and she recalls it was a very painful sensation.”

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 131.



E. Sturm, a private investigator based in Topeka, to visit various newsstands and attempt to purchase “obscene” material. Called to the stand on April 4, 1963, Sturm testified that he had traveled to the Pines in Salina and City News Stand in Topeka, purchasing magazines that became defendant’s exhibit Y-1 and Z-1. Sturm testified about a simple approach to his investigation: “I walked in, went to the magazine rack and went through all the magazines that were on the display and purchased these that were on the shelves.” The purpose, as Crow explained to Judge Templar, “is to show –attempt to show the contemporary standards of the community as to the material that is readily available to anyone.”<sup>74</sup> Perhaps most important, these works demonstrated to the jury that material that contained more colloquial depictions of sexuality than Cauldwell’s text were already present within the community.

Unfortunately, the texts purchased by Sturm do not reside in the case file of the National Archives, yet Beth Bailey’s work on the sexual revolution in Kansas provides confirmation that seemingly obscene material could be obtained quite easily.<sup>75</sup> Her study reveals that “Lawrence’s citizens certainly had a wide variety of material to choose from” and “clearly, sexual material was proliferating in public places frequented by ‘respectable people.’”<sup>76</sup> Bailey’s work has uncovered the controversy and outrage at the proliferation of obscene material, among central Kansas’s residents, the very type of people chosen for the Haldeman jury.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>74</sup> Ibid., 354

<sup>75</sup> Bailey, 43. Bailey demonstrates the level of pornographic and sexually explicit published material available at newsstands Lawrence, Kansas. She states that the Lawrence PTA undertook a campaign against “inappropriate” magazines, comics, and paperback books” in which “volunteers writes visited all the groceries, drugstores, and newsstands in Lawrence, compiling detailed records on the ‘objectionable material’ they found on the shelves.” Within this effort, the Lawrence PTA reported finding “out of twenty establishments surveyed, only three displayed nothing deemed objectionable.”

<sup>76</sup> Ibid.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., ad passim. Also see Lisa McGirr, *Suburban Warriors: The Origins of the new American Right* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2001). Whereas Bailey focuses her examination on Lawrence, Kansas, McGirr focuses on Orange County, California. McGirr’s work provides a broad analysis of the factors which gave rise to conservative political candidates during the mid-twentieth-century. Especially useful is her examination of cultural conservatism and the opposition to loosening moral standards within the movement’s early formation. Both

In addition to availability of sexual material, Haldeman's attorneys sought to demonstrate the medical usefulness of Cauldwell's work. Dr. David Gray, a Topeka physician and member of the American Medical Association and Kansas Obstetrics Society, testified there was a significant overlap between his experience in private practice and the information presented by Cauldwell. When pressed by George during cross-examination as to the possible impact of Cauldwell's work on the average individual, an important aspect of the obscenity standard, Gray asserted, "A well-adjusted individual is certainly not going to be harmed by these things. A maladjusted individual is going to be harmed by a thousand and one other things he is exposed to every day above these." Furthermore, in Gray's opinion, the work of Cauldwell did not increase the likelihood of an individual engaging in the behavior described, but rather it could "give him a certain amount of release of tension by understanding that these things do exist and that medical opinion has a way of interpreting them which is different from his own guilt reaction and society's reaction against him."<sup>78</sup> Gray saw no need for the prohibition against Cauldwell's works; they were medically sound, with the ability to influence people in a positive manner.

Haldeman's defense also called Dr. Herbert C. Moldin, a physician at the Menninger Foundation in Topeka and associate professor at the University of Kansas Medical School, who testified regarding the uses of Cauldwell's work and Cauldwell's credentials. Beyond a practicing psychiatrist, Moldin also lectured to both University of Kansas and Washburn University students on the topic of "sexual drive, sexual problems, and sexual deviations."<sup>79</sup> Under direct examination, Moldin echoed the sentiment of Gray and asserted that the books were aimed to demystify sexuality and offered reassurance to individuals regarding their own sexual

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scholars provide an effective introduction to the controversies over sexuality in twentieth-century society that continues to animate contemporary social and political discourse.

<sup>78</sup> *U.S. v. Henry J. Haldeman*, 311.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* 332. Moldin's testimony is 330-350.

desires.<sup>80</sup> He asserted, “Most of the sexologists that we are acquainted with were not M.D.’s. Alfred Kinsey, for example, Havelock Ellis, [*sic*] were not physicians.”<sup>81</sup> What mattered to both Gray and Moldin was the potential benefit of Cauldwell’s work – the reduced tension felt by individuals who failed to live up to the strict sexual expectations of society.

As the trial wound down, arguments began over the phrasing and content of the jury instructions. Crow attempted to insert language into the jury instructions defining “‘community,’ be ‘the nation as whole.’”<sup>82</sup> Crow lodged his objection to numerous individual jury instructions clearly indicating his desire for a broader, more encompassing standard. While the judge refused to include the broad definition of community in all instructions, he did relent on instruction number 13, which read: “Obscenity is not a matter of individual taste. . . the test is how would the average person of the community view the material. The community here involved refers to the nation as a whole and not to a limited geographic portion of it.”<sup>83</sup> While this seemingly constituted a victory for Haldeman, and an indication of the broadening standards of the period, it did little to increase Haldeman’s chances because of the low burden of proof in obscenity cases set by *Roth* and the notion of “prurient interest.” While Haldeman-Julius had clearly created an ideological community through his publishing catalog (along the lines of those theorized by Bender and Anderson), the court case would be judged by jurors culled from a geographic community. If community was defined as the nation, as Haldeman’s defense wished, it would reflect the shift in America from early twentieth century island communities to a unified national public sphere governed by consistent policies.

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<sup>80</sup> Ibid., 333.

<sup>81</sup> Ibid., 350.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid., 368.

<sup>83</sup> “Jury instruction 13,” *U.S. v. Henry J. Haldeman*.

Moreover, Crow requested the court allow the defense to include instructions that alluded to the content of Cauldwell's writing. Citing *United States vs. Dennet*, 39 Fed. 2d, 564, Crow argued that the case had set a precedent with regard to material dealing "specifically with books that had medical value." As a result, he argued, "our expert witnesses testified along these lines and we should be entitled to an instruction pursuant to that case [*Dennet*] . . . we have asked for two of them – three of them."<sup>84</sup> Denying this request, the court replied that such an instruction would only have been applicable if catalogs containing Cauldwell's work had only been provided to a customer list only containing physicians. Since catalogs had been "sent out promiscuously" and "not only to people who were in the medical profession but to any person who had ever written in and requested a Blue Book" application of, and instruction on, *Dennet* was improper.<sup>85</sup> Because Haldeman distributed the catalogs advertising the work of Cauldwell to mass audiences, the judge ruled they were not marketed them for purely medical purposes.

### **Conviction and Fallout**

The jury found Haldeman guilty on all but one count of the original indictment and sentenced him to an eighteen-month prison term.<sup>86</sup> Though the judgment of community jurors had led to his conviction, another segment of the Kansas community came to his defense. Samuel S. Shapira, a reader who "used to be a customer of E. Haldeman-Julius as a younger Pennsylvania lawyer," offered any help that he could because he believed that "the Blue Book Publications . . . did a great work to spread knowledge over the world." He told Henry that he "hope[d] that this will not interfere with your book printing business, and if you have to serve time you have someone to run the business for you while on your forced vacation." Finally, he

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<sup>84</sup> *U.S. v. Henry J. Haldeman*, 372.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, 373.

<sup>86</sup> "Opening Brief for the Appellant," 2.

expressed solidarity: “I don’t want to see your enemies destroy you. America is now a jungle land ruled by beasts of prey without pity or decency. And the people are no better than the rulers.”<sup>87</sup>

The case of Henry J. Haldeman became a more popular subject for newspaper coverage. After reading an article by Lyle Stuart published on April 19, 1964, a University of Kansas graduate student Laird Wilcox traveled to Girard to interview Haldeman. Working to spread the word of Haldeman’s conviction, Wilcox and his associates submitted numerous editorials to papers such as *The Wichita Eagle* and *The National Guardian*. An editorial in *The Wichita Eagle*, written by Wilcox’s wife Elaine, detailed the issues that led to the charges, the proceedings of the trial, who spoke on behalf of Haldeman, and the legal precedent that the court ignored. Specifically, she referenced *U.S. v. Dennet*, which held that books of medical value did not constitute obscenity, and *Cain v. Universal Pictures*, which ruled that copyrighted material is not obscene. She ended her editorial by warning of the “shades of Scopes” found in the Haldeman case.<sup>88</sup>

Appearing in *The National Guardian* one day later, Laird Wilcox’s editorial on Haldeman’s case went further in criticizing the jury and describing defense strategy. Wilcox wrote “None of the individuals responsible for the indictment in 1961 had read the books, but, rather, protested them solely on the basis of their titles.” Further, he related the parade of “experts” who testified on Haldeman’s behalf to the usefulness of Cauldwell’s writing.<sup>89</sup> Wilcox noted that “all testified to the technical accuracy of both books and their medical value.”<sup>90</sup> In

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<sup>87</sup> Samuel S. Shapira to Henry Haldeman. February 6, 1964. E. Haldeman-Julius Collection, Axe Library, Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas.

<sup>88</sup> Eileen Wilcox, *Wichita Eagle*, May 22, 1964.

<sup>89</sup> Laird Wilcox, *National Guardian*, May 23, 1964.

<sup>90</sup> *Kansas Free Press*, No. 11, April, 27 1964. Henry J. Haldeman Collection. Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

June 14, 1964, an article appeared in the *New York Times* that Haldeman directly attributed to coverage of the case by the *Kansas Free Press*, an independent student publication at the University of Kansas.<sup>91</sup> The *Kansas Free Press* was instrumental in alerting the Lawrence, Kansas, chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union to Haldeman's case and soliciting from the group an appeals court on behalf of Haldeman. Moreover, Laird Wilcox wrote in the *Kansas Free Press* that "each juror was given a copy of each of the eight books and instructed to read them word for word. Within two hours the jurors trooped back into the courtroom, bored, perhaps, with the total lack of pictures and the technical terms."<sup>92</sup>

What separated the obscenity trial of Henry Haldeman from the political controversies of his father was the issue of content and public animosity. Whereas Haldeman-Julius's political speech not only received begrudging First Amendment protection, the decision to allow postal shipping rested entirely with government officials. At no point did those controversies result in a jury trial. The obscenity trial of Henry Haldeman came during a period of backlash against cultural liberalization. In fact, during Wilcox's investigation into the trial "a juror afterwards explained to the lawyer that 'those expert witnesses just don't understand the dangers of open sex discussion. We want to get all sex off the market and we decided to start right here.'"<sup>93</sup> The community standards that governed obscenity, through the eyes of a jury of Topekans, allowed for the prohibition of material they deemed offensive. For the jury, the Haldeman trial clearly became a mechanism by which they could impose a strict legal definition of obscenity and strike back against the popular loosening of cultural standards.

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<sup>91</sup> Ibid.

<sup>92</sup> Ibid.

<sup>93</sup> *Kansas Free Press*, No. 11, April, 27 1964. Henry J. Haldeman Collection. Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

## Aftermath

Haldeman found himself faced with either accepting or appealing the court's decision. Choosing the latter path, he increasingly faced financial shortages. Wilcox established a defense fund for Haldeman's appeal, imploring *Kansas Free Press* readers "to help correct this obvious encroachment on freedom of speech and freedom of the press" and noted that "the *Kansas Free Press* has constituted itself a fund raising body."<sup>94</sup> Thus, those who wanted to offer Haldeman aid could send contributions to the offices of the *Kansas Free Press*. Contributions came in from a variety of sources; University of Kansas department members contributed, but Wilcox expressed disappointment that he only collected thirty-five dollars from Watson Library, ten dollars from the history department, five dollars from philosophy, and four dollars from political science.<sup>95</sup> Wilcox received one hundred and fifty dollars from Lyle Stuart of *The Independent* and various small contributions from concerned citizens.<sup>96</sup>

Regarding the despair faced by the Haldemans, Wilcox lamented that "having sold all that he owns what is sellable (Know anybody interested in a massive warehouse in the middle of Kansas? Besides, he and his family are living in a corner of it!), Henry J. Haldeman must now raise an additional \$2,000 in order to cover the court costs for his appeal." Wilcox noted "most of his dealers have quit since the conviction, cutting his business 75 per cent. He said the loss of income had forced him to lay off employees and learn to operate the presses himself. He said he was so 'broke' he had sold some of his machinery and household goods to pay \$8,000 in legal

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<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> *Kansas Free Press*, No. 11, April, 27 1964. Henry J. Haldeman Collection. Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid.

fees and trial costs.”<sup>97</sup> The fallout of the conviction crippled Haldeman-Julius Publishing, and the company folded completely just over a decade later.<sup>98</sup>

According to Wilcox, Haldeman could have avoided such a costly verdict. Wilcox wrote in the *Kansas Free Press*, “The government lawyer arranged that he [Haldeman] could plead guilty to only one count and the rest would be dropped. The prosecution agreed to say nothing critical at the sentencing, which was expected to be a tongue lashing.” In order to obtain such a light sentence, Haldeman “would in return withdraw from the market these valued books on the subject of sex, medically and terminologically correct.” Wilcox added, “Mr. Haldeman refused the offer, not for fear of losing the sales from a few books but because he felt he must, personally if necessary, fight this narrowing of freedom of the press.”<sup>99</sup> Characterizing Haldeman’s legal appeal as a struggle for free speech and free press, Wilcox used these larger issues to frame his Haldeman defense fundraising efforts. He wrote, “Unless that need is met during the summer, it’s possible that Haldeman will not be able to continue his fight for justice and freedom of the press in Kansas.”<sup>100</sup>

### **The Appeal and a New Standard**

Haldeman’s attorney filed an appeal centered on the testimony given by witnesses, the educational value of Cauldwell’s text, and the commonality of sexual information. Crow, Haldeman’s attorney, based the appeal on four points: First, “Appellant’s books, containing accurate sex information couched in chaste language, are not obscene. Appellant’s conviction for mailing non-obscene books violates the free speech provisions of the first amendment.” Second, “the court erroneously instructed the jury on the laws of obscenity and failed to properly instruct

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<sup>97</sup> *Kansas Free Press*, No. 11, April 27, 1964

<sup>98</sup> Rolf Potts, “The Henry Ford of Literature.” *The Believer*, 6, no. 7. September 2008, 8.

<sup>99</sup> *Kansas Free Press*, No. 11, April 27, 1964.

<sup>100</sup> *Ibid.*



on the issue of obscenity” and, as a result, “authorized the jury to find the books obscene under unconstitutional standards.” Third, the defense argued that “the conviction of appellant without any requirement of proof by appellee that the books exceeded contemporary standards of the nation and despite uncontradicted evidence offered by the appellant” failed to demonstrate “that the books do not go beyond the limits of candor, violates the free speech and due process provisions of the first and fifth amendments.” Finally, the appeal argued that “Appellant’s conviction for mailing books he honestly believed were not obscene violated the free speech provisions of the first amendment . . . and the due process provisions of the fifth amendment.”<sup>101</sup> Challenging the puritanical prohibition on sexual information, Crow sought to emphasize the positive impact of Cauldwell’s writing.

The appeal asserts that “D. O. Cauldwell was a pioneer in popularizing sex information for the persons who were not fortunate enough to be able to go to college where such information was readily available” or “were not wealthy enough to purchase hard cover sex information books containing generally the same material in a more frank manner.” This egalitarian mission had been a hallmark of Haldeman-Julius’s career since the 1920s. The appeal characterized the works of Cauldwell as being “in the tradition of other respected writers in the field, such as Havelock Ellis, Krafft-Ebing and Kinsey, who feel there is a great deal of harmful mystery and pseudo-morality enveloped in sexual behavior.”<sup>102</sup>

Haldeman’s attorney’s argued that the lower court had applied incorrect standards and precedent. Citing *Roth v. United States*, the appeal asserted that “in determining whether a book is obscene, or constitutionally protected speech, the work must be placed in ‘context’ so that its

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<sup>101</sup> “Opening Brief for the Appellant.” Haldeman Briefs from Court of Appeals, Kenneth Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. 6.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

‘color and character’ may be fairly evaluated.”<sup>103</sup> Moreover, the appeal argued that “the test of obscenity enunciated by the Court in *Roth* was ‘whether to the average person applying contemporary standards, the dominant theme of the material taken as a whole appeals to prurient interests.’”<sup>104</sup> Haldeman’s attorneys also argued that *Roth* established that “material, dealing with sex in a manner that advocates ideas . . . or that has literary or scientific or artistic value or any other form of social importance, may not be branded as obscenity and denied constitutional protection.”<sup>105</sup> Cauldwell’s work, in Crow’s eyes, should therefore not be prohibited and the conviction had been based upon a limited application of legal precedent. Clearly, the court’s intention had not been such a wide-ranging condemnation and Cauldwell’s work should be allowed within the mail.

The notion of competing, localized definitions of obscenity came under fire in *Jacobellis v. Ohio* (1964) and Haldeman’s appeal further benefited from the shift toward a national obscenity standard. *Jacobellis* involved a film that had been allowed in virtually all areas of the country, but as a result of “community standards” per *Roth* the film had been banned in Ohio.<sup>106</sup> Justice Brennan, however, interpreted the facts in such a way that “to sustain the suppression of a particular book or film in one locality would deter its dissemination in other localities” and thus unfairly limit expressions of freedom of speech.”<sup>107</sup> Post *Jacobellis*, obscenity laws increasingly used complex criteria based upon content, audience, and intent. Haldeman’s appeal noted that the *Jacobellis* appeal courts asserted that while “many persons were of the view ‘that on the whole the less sex questions are dwelt upon the better’ . . . the old theory about sex matters had greatly

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<sup>103</sup> Ibid.

<sup>104</sup> “Opening Brief for the Appellant,” 10.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid.

<sup>106</sup> The case of *Jacobellis v. Ohio* remains best known for the declaration of Justice Stewart “I know it [obscenity] when I see it” which would resonate as a nebulous criterion against which to judge any questionable material.

<sup>107</sup> Friedman, 174.

changed.” As a result, “while there is still a difference of opinion as to just the amount of instruction which out to be given, it is commonly thought these days that much was lacking in the old mystery and reticence.”<sup>108</sup> Thus, the decision in *Jacobellis* recognized a difference between the obscenity of sexual language and the need for use of such language in sexual instruction – a stated goal of Cauldwell’s work as published by Haldeman.

Justice Brennan further opined in *Jacobellis v. Ohio* that “it follows that material . . . that has literary or scientific or artistic value or any other form of social importance, may not be branded as obscenity and denied constitutional protection.”<sup>109</sup> This led Haldeman’s attorneys to criticize the initial conviction and the judgment of Cauldwell’s writing as obscene. Haldeman’s appeal argued, “If freedom is to be preserved, juries cannot ‘be left to make the final effective decision restraining free expression.’” Rather, “their decisions must be subject to effective, independent review, and we know of no group better qualified for that review than the appellate judges of this country under the guidance of the Supreme Court.”<sup>110</sup> Clearly, the judgment in *Jacobellis* allowed obscenity to increasingly come under the purview of judicial arbiters rather than public perception. Not surprisingly, legal definition and public perception often differed greatly and this development allowed for increasingly permissive obscenity standards. Moreover, this argument by Haldeman’s attorneys stemmed from the fact that American culture had been moving away from “island communities” for the past four decades. No longer were charges of obscenity subject to localized definitions and isolated interpretations.

Beyond the impact and purpose of the work, judging whether the content of the work went further than acceptable standards allowed was a necessary hurdle for prosecuting attorneys. Haldeman’s appeal argued that in order to judge whether or not Cauldwell’s books “offend[ed]

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<sup>108</sup> “Opening Brief for the Appellant,” 13.

<sup>109</sup> Friedman, 172.

<sup>110</sup> “Opening Brief for the Appellant,” 11.

community standards they must be judged by the standards of the nation as whole, and not the local community of Topeka, or the State of Kansas, or indeed, any other geographic area.”

Haldeman’s appeal stated that “the books and magazines introduced by the appellant demonstrate to a certainty that the appellant’s books do not go substantially beyond the limits of candor in the nation as a whole.”<sup>111</sup> Not only do the works of Cauldwell published by Haldeman not exceed levels of acceptability on the national level, they also do not differ considerably from already accepted publications. Beyond the direct testimony regarding purchases made in various Kansas towns of similar content to Cauldwell’s works, the appeal notes that various sources contain both nonfiction and fiction works, which “go substantially beyond the indicted books in language used, in the kind of sexual activity described, and the manner of describing.”<sup>112</sup>

## Reversal

In 1965, the United States 10<sup>th</sup> District Court overturned the initial conviction of Henry J. Haldeman. The court stated that “the eight booklets involved in this case do not make pleasant reading, but we are convinced that it cannot be said that they are utterly without social importance or that their descriptions and representations go substantially beyond customary limits of candor.”<sup>113</sup> Moreover, the appeal found that “from what was said in Roth and Jacobellis and the decisions which followed that published materials are obscene in a constitutional sense only when they are within the area of “hard core pornography”, whatever that term may mean.” In the eyes of the appeals court, Cauldwell’s writing clearly did not fit the definition of “hardcore pornography.”<sup>114</sup> Though not often cited as a legal landmark case, Haldeman’s appeal has found

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<sup>111</sup> “Opening Brief for the Appellant,” 18.

<sup>112</sup> Ibid.

<sup>113</sup> *Henry J. Haldeman, appellant, v. United States of America, appellee*. 340 F.2d 59 (10<sup>th</sup> Dist. 1965).

<sup>114</sup> 340 F.2d 59 (10<sup>th</sup> Dist. 1965).

relevance in other legal understandings of evolving obscenity standards and helped strengthen interpretation of national standards and cement the role of *Jacobellis* within American jurisprudence.<sup>115</sup>

Perhaps the most important finding in the Haldeman appeal has been the judicial assertion that the wrong party decided the case. In the initial trial, the jury had been given the texts in question, and after both the prosecution and defense presented their cases, was allowed to adjudicate judgment. On appeal, however, the court ruled, “While the question of obscenity may be properly submitted to the jury in a case in which a party has a right to a jury trial, it cannot properly be reposed in the jury for final disposition as a question of fact, and must ultimately be resolved by the court.” What the public, or the jury, deemed to be both offensive and obscene did not necessarily correspond to the legal definition. Finally, the Haldeman case demonstrated that “material dealing with sex is to be determined in the light of the effect it has when taken as a whole, and not by isolated excerpts, upon the average person and not the peculiarly susceptible.”<sup>116</sup> Cauldwell’s text did not arouse the average individual, so his work and others like it should be permitted within society.

## Conclusion

In 1919, Emanuel Haldeman-Julius founded a publishing company he hoped would become a “university in print.” Through the accumulation of a vast number of authors, titles, and independent subscribers, he used Little Blue Books to break down barriers that had prevented individuals from accessing knowledge. Through mass marketing he distributed his materials far

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<sup>115</sup> American Law Reports. “Cases and Annotations.” 1966. 3d, Vol. 5. 1158. The American Law Reports asserted that the Haldeman case demonstrated “material dealing with sex is only obscene when it goes substantially beyond customary limits of candor in the description or representation of such matters” and that “the guaranty of the Constitution is not confined to conventional material or to the expression of views shared by a majority of citizens.”

<sup>116</sup> American Law Review, 1158.

and wide, bypassing the small and rigidly conservative audience in southeast Kansas. Numerous controversies engulfed Haldeman-Julius as he challenged political and social convention. When Henry Haldeman inherited the company in 1951, he undoubtedly hoped to continue the company's profitability and wide distribution of published materials. Unwittingly, however, he not only carried on these traditions but also mimicked his father's penchant for controversy.

*Henry Haldeman v. United States* was one of many legal contests that collectively redefined the protections afforded controversial material during the mid-twentieth century. Convincing a jury of Topekans that works by D.O. Cauldwell were obscene in nature proved relatively easy for U.S. attorney Newall George, as conservative elements in society sought to restrain the proliferation of sexuality in popular culture and society writ large. Yet, the overturning of the verdict by the appeals court, in light of changing legal precedent, demonstrated a tide turning towards more permissive nationalized legal standards. Clarification of the *Roth* test, as a result of *Jacobellis v. Ohio*, which occurred after Haldeman's conviction, allowed for an emphasis on the medical value of Cauldwell's works and the judgment that his works did not appeal to the "prurient interests" of the individual.

The reversal of the initial verdict in the Haldeman case indicates a loosening of obscenity law instrumental in the liberalizing of other aspects of American society during the turbulent 1960s. In the battle against obscenity, efforts to define what constituted obscene material resulted in legal definitions that attempted to encompass the nation and became so broad they were largely untenable. Due to the diversity of American society, these broad standards increasingly allowed Americans to determine for themselves appropriate levels of sexuality. These changes, while liberalizing in some respects, galvanized opponents of further loosened standards and

sowed the seeds for continual conflict over the acceptability of sexuality within society in the coming decades.

The free spread of information had always been central to the existence of Haldeman-Julius Publishing, and though the quest ultimately made the company a martyr, the company's contribution to freedom of information distribution in America helped establish a nation-wide public sphere. When Haldeman-Julius started the company in 1919, America was coming together as a nation and breaking down the barriers of innumerable "island communities." By the time his son's conviction was overturned in 1965 a national public sphere had arrived in America.

## Chapter 5: William Lindsay White's Independence

When William Lindsay White returned from a European sojourn toward the end of 1958 he sent a Christmas greeting to DeWitt Wallace. Beyond the normal holiday wishes, White explained that he had chosen to visit Rome because “in the past 5 years, the departed old Roman Empire has become an increasing interest of mine. For Modern America is so like it – powerful, vigorous, a great organizer, intensely practical.” Beyond the positive comparisons, however, White observed that “I see in us today seeds of the same thing which brought about Rome’s collapse. . . . We also are becoming more dangerously centralized – more dependent on the bread and circuses of Washington, with a weakened sense of individual responsibility.”<sup>1</sup>

During the late 1940s, and throughout the 1950s and 1960s, William Lindsay White continued regularly to publish work that earned accolades and praise. He spoke to his growing audience, both through *Reader’s Digest* and the *Emporia Gazette*, about the importance of racial inclusion, education, and self-reliance. In addition, as his career progressed and he established his own reputation, he increasingly pursued stories of personal interest and used his platform to express an unfailing faith in capitalism, free enterprise, and a conservative economic policy. The 1960s, however, also brought change to White’s public sphere involvement. He routinely quarreled with new figures at the *Digest* as the magazine gradually published less and less of his work. In a manner similar to that of Haldeman-Julius, White became embroiled in political conflicts. This chapter argues that though White’s public platform shifted from the nationally distributed *Reader’s Digest* to the community based *Emporia Gazette*, White did not ultimately lose access to the public sphere in the same manner as Haldeman-Julius. White had an enduring connection to Emporia and positive national reputation that helped him maintain a loyal

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<sup>1</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 23 December, 1958. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.



readership. In other words, public sphere platforms built on geographic communities, and bolstered by national goodwill, proved more enduring than ideologically created audiences and consistent controversy.

### **Continuing to Criticize Exclusion**

Though White did not deal in polemics in the same manner as Haldeman-Julius, he did challenge the status quo. White's 1947 *Lost Boundaries* chronicled the events surrounding Albert Johnston, his wife Thyra, and their son, Albert Jr. This commercially successful work serves as an effective example of how Lindsay White cleverly challenged the continued exclusion of African Americans from American society. White wrote "In appearance Thyra Baumann had a creamy soft skin, wavy, light brown hair, and blue eyes."<sup>2</sup> Similarly, Albert Johnston appeared light skinned and with questionable racial identity. In fact, White noted, "When he was twelve, people began asking what he was, and since he was embarrassed to say he was part Negro, he told them he was one-eighth Cherokee Indian," which was true.<sup>3</sup> As a result of unidentifiable racial appearances, the couple was able to pass as white. White's story described how Albert Sr. applied for medical residencies, and after being turned down by multiple hospitals due to his race, Maine General Hospital hired him as an intern without knowledge of his background. White explained that "had he gone to Howard or Meharry Medical Schools, which are exclusively Negro, of course they would have known." Johnston's attendance at an integrated medical school masked his racial identity. White continued, "A diploma from Rush proves

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<sup>2</sup> William Lindsay White, *Lost Boundaries* (New York, NY: Harcourt, Brace, and Company, 1947), 12.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, 16.

nothing of its bearer's racial background—proves only that he has the brains to finish one of the nation's stiffest and best medical schools.”<sup>4</sup>

White's story details how the Johnstons lived a version of the American dream. Albert Johnston, after successfully completing a residency at Maine General Hospital, purchased a retiring doctors' practice and became a practicing physician.<sup>5</sup> During this period, life for Albert and Thyra seemed to be picture perfect. They successfully integrated themselves into the community of Gorham, Massachusetts, as Albert became active in civic organizations and Thyra focused on the home and their children. As a pillar of the community, Albert Johnston decided to further serve his country during World War II by volunteering as a surgeon for the United States Navy, but the Navy denied his admission based on race.<sup>6</sup> This episode constituted the crux of White's damning indictment against white society. Rejected by his country, Albert Sr.'s inability to achieve full membership in American society stemmed from a system of racial exclusion and directly contributed to his son experiencing a nervous breakdown. Albert Jr. searched for true racial identity, first among other African Americans, then by attempting to pass as white, and in the process suffered a nervous breakdown. Albert Jr. eventually found peace by embracing his conflicted racial origins and by realizing that his actions might not end racial distinctions but they could “help blur them a little around the edges, and that would do something for all of us. Boundaries wouldn't be quite so sharp.”<sup>7</sup>

In his 1948 *New York Times* review of White's book, Walter White of the N.A.A.C.P. proclaimed that “I wish I could claim credit for the book.” William Lindsay White's *Lost Boundaries* “packs into fewer than 100 pages more sound and accurate observation and comment

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<sup>4</sup> William Lindsay White, *Lost Boundaries*, 20.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 18.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid., 30-33.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid., 89.

on the question of ‘passing’ to escape the burdens of color in caste-ridden America than many ponderous treatises.” Moreover, “Mr. White has done a superb job of reporting without preachment the dilemma human beings of culture and ambition face in a society which damns a man because he chose to be born with so-called ‘colored blood.’”<sup>8</sup>

Overwhelmingly positive criticism greeted the release of this work and echoed William Lindsay White’s criticism of race relations in America. *The Commonweal* wrestled with the reality that “actually it was neither the fact that he was Negro nor the discovery of that fact that did these things to him.” It resulted from, rather, “the fact that an idiotic murderous pattern of prejudice in this country makes it impossible for a Negro to live a normal, rational, integrated life in our society.”<sup>9</sup> A review in the *Chicago Tribune* explained more succinctly that “the book confronts us with the awesome dichotomy between our ideals and our actions.”<sup>10</sup> Limited not only to well-known publications, or to lamentations regarding the plight of the protagonists, reviews of *Lost Boundaries* also placed burden upon readers to identify with the Johnstons. The *Chicago Defender*, an African American newspaper, commented, “Even the most prejudiced person must find something here to make him question – if even for a moment – American racial practices.”<sup>11</sup>

While White appreciated the positive critical reaction to this story, he suggested to DeWitt Wallace in April of 1948 that perhaps this indicated the work was “the kind of innocuous book with which everybody agrees and ha[d] been afraid to tackle really important and therefore

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<sup>8</sup> Walter White, review of *Lost Boundaries*, written by William Lindsay White, *New York Times*, March 28, 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>9</sup> “Review of *Lost Boundaries*,” *Commonweal*. May 21, 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>10</sup> “Review of *Lost Boundaries*,” *Chicago Tribune*. May 16, 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>11</sup> “Review of *Lost Boundaries*,” *Chicago Defender*. April 3, 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

controversial problems.”<sup>12</sup> He continued, “I would even concede that this might be true so far as the book edition of this story is concerned. After all a book reaches a limited audience and most of these people are already convinced.”<sup>13</sup> White felt confident in the book’s overall impact. He told Wallace that through publication in the *Digest* “the story really got down to the grass roots and was read by a lot of people who were not sympathetic to the subject. I am particularly grateful to the *Digest* for spreading it far and wide.”<sup>14</sup> White’s appreciation of the *Digest* audience would be echoed in letters to Wallace throughout the late 1940s and 1950s. In contrast to both Haldeman-Julius and Franklin, who founded their own publications, White’s sentiment underscores the impact a pre-established publication had upon his career trajectory.

When Louis de Rochemont expressed a desire to negotiate for movie rights, he told White, “I feel we can do a tremendously significant movie which will be excellent entertainment as well.”<sup>15</sup> In subsequent correspondence he asserted that the “story [is] excellent and [I am] confident [it] will make powerful movie. Because it touches on subjects hitherto taboo in Hollywood.”<sup>16</sup> Much like the written incarnations of *Lost Boundaries*, the film contained criticism of American racial exclusion and affected viewers in a similar manner. Following a viewing of the film, White wrote an unpublished reaction in which he reported that “I found myself after ten minutes, unable to follow clearly that all familiar story on the screen because my eyes kept getting wet, and in half an hour they had me crying like a baby.”<sup>17</sup> White was moved

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<sup>12</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 19 April 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Louis de Rochemont to William Lindsay White, 6 September 1947. In William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. Also, see: *Lost Boundaries*, [www.imdb.com](http://www.imdb.com). de Rochemont purchased the film rights to *Lost Boundaries* from White in 1947 and released the film in the summer of 1949.

<sup>16</sup> Louis de Rochemont to William Lindsay White, 6 September 1947. In William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>17</sup> William Lindsay White reaction to film version of *Lost Boundaries*. In William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

by the impact of “Louis de Rochemont, selecting the familiar things of everyday New England life and molding it without distraction, has, with courage and poignancy, not only told the story of a great national problem, but has given New England’s answer to that challenge.”<sup>18</sup> By this, White refers to the ability of the Johnstons to be accepted by Gorham residents despite their suspicions regarding the Johnston’s racial background.

The story’s impact is most clearly seen within the correspondence White received from his readers. Alfred McClung Lee, a sociology professor at Wayne State University, told White that “in my estimation, your effort will be much more useful in helping the cause of interracial sanity than the more preachy sort of thing.”<sup>19</sup> Not all letters, however, heaped praise upon the work. White explained to DeWitt Wallace, “Some of the letters I got from the South did not agree with me but they were all thoughtful letters in the best sense of the word.” He noted, however, that “you could see that the story had made them examine their conscience and their prejudices rather than arousing more prejudice.” For White, this helped confirm the positive impact of his story on readers.<sup>20</sup>

Correspondence from African-American readers proved most poignant. Geraldine Browne, a nursing student at Olivet College in Kankakee, Illinois, wrote to White in January of 1948 for advice on her situation. She was “passing” her true racial identity unknown to even her roommate, yet her desire to help “her people” left her conflicted. Even her family, she wrote, could not come to a consensus regarding her desire to reveal her true racial background.<sup>21</sup> As a result, she hoped that White, given his experience in writing *Lost Boundaries*, could offer some

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<sup>18</sup> William Lindsay White reaction to film version of *Lost Boundaries*. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>19</sup> Alfred McClung Lee to William Lindsay White. 4 May 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>20</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 19 April 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>21</sup> Geraldine Browne to William Lindsay White. 14 January 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

advice. White's response advised her to maintain her "passing" and revealed as much about him personally as it did about his attitude toward racial equality and social change. He wrote, "I do not justify this on any high moral ground. It is not a rule which I recommend everyone follow" but "it is rather an estimate of my own character. Being a little cowardly and also being of the disposition to make the best out of life where this can be done without hurting others."<sup>22</sup> White advocated to Browne that, in this situation, since "passing" has allowed her access to opportunities she would not otherwise have, continuing would be in her best interest. He went on to state, however, that some "when confronted with this decision, have decided the other way. I admire them, but I doubt that I should have the courage to follow their example."<sup>23</sup> White's belief in racial equality, which he shared with both Emanuel and Marcet Haldeman-Julius and Chester Franklin, manifested itself in *Lost Boundaries* and echoed earlier pieces focused on military integration. White embraced the contact he gained with readers through the public sphere and often offered them personal advice. He expressed solidarity with their situation and advocated broad social change, but ultimately expressed his own reluctance to employ direct protest.

### **Foreigners Encounter the U.S.**

A commitment to racial equality domestically was paralleled by White's endorsement of foreigner people's potential to embody American values. White authored for his domestic audience several works that analyzed the Russian, German, and Polish populations in the immediate aftermath of World War II. In the late 1940s, he increasingly focused on the reactions

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<sup>22</sup> William Lindsay White to Geraldine Browne. 24 January 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>23</sup> Geraldine Browne to William Lindsay White. 14 January 1948. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

and experiences of foreigners within America. These writings illustrated the potential White identified within foreigners and the vital role positive experiences in America could have upon worldwide perception of American values.

White wrote to DeWitt Wallace in 1946 extolling the virtues of a story which would center upon Soviet defector Vasili Kotov's "completely naïf and unspoiled viewpoint, his reaction to the western world as he saw it for the first time and the way his illusions fell away."<sup>24</sup> The first section of White's *Land of Milk and Honey*, titled "Vasili's First Days in America," highlighted Kotov's reaction to the United States and his initial experiences with democracy. The story personified White's view of American political superiority and the potential of Russians to adapt to capitalism. From Vasili's exuberant enthusiasm for the readily available turkey sandwiches in the local delicatessen, to the more substantive admiration he had for freedom of movement within America, Vasili proved an effective tool for White to contrast life in America with that of the Soviet Union. Vasili, White wrote, reacted with trepidation when no secret police force authenticated his documents upon hotel check-in and "it was a week before he could really be convinced" that in America there existed no system by which to regulate travel. Another surprise greeted him when he realized that "in this country each store seemed open to all people so that even a poor man could buy if he was willing to pay the price. Vasili thought that this was not only a good system but a fair one."<sup>25</sup> To White, Vasili's experiences emphasized the universal desirability of American resources, societal openness, and equality.

While "Vasili's First Days in America" concentrated on humanizing Vasili and shared anecdotes about the openness and abundance of life in America, the second selection from *Land of Milk and Honey*, published in May of 1949, proved much darker. This selection detailed

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<sup>24</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 1 December 1946. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>25</sup> William Lindsay White, "Vasili's First Days in America," *Reader's Digest*, January 1949, 7.

Vasili's escape from Russia and the reasons behind his decision to defect. As a child of the revolution, Vasili had known nothing of non-Communist Russia and had grown up a believer in the Soviet system. White told readers that "Vasili's school years were the happiest of his time in the Soviet Union, particularly the years from 1924 to 1928" in large part because during this period "Lenin's New Economic Policy (NEP) allowed small private business to operate and peasants to sell their produce on the free market. In those days there was plenty of food and good shoes and clothes for all the Kotov family."<sup>26</sup> Acknowledging that Vasili had once had a good life in the Soviet Union, yet on the other issuing a backhanded criticism of the increasingly closed Soviet markets, White set the stage for Vasili's impending disillusionment.

Growing up, White explained, Vasili enjoyed the companionship of a close cadre of schoolmates. Of these schoolmates, however, Vasili would be the sole survivor of the purges in 1936. White wrote that "he realized for the first time that everything, even the students' casual chatter and fun, was being accurately reported by someone."<sup>27</sup> After graduating with an engineering degree, and beginning work on Soviet aircraft, Vasili encountered a girl from his past who had been coerced, through her father's being purged, into utilizing her feminine charms in the service of the secret police. The misfortunes of his schoolmates took an emotional toll on Vasili and combined with his wartime exposure to the material abundance and intellectual freedom of the West during the war, gave him little hope for his Russian future.<sup>28</sup> White described the fortunate combination of ground fog, a drunken pilot, and a safe parachute landing that facilitated Vasili's escape to the west. Once on the ground, Vasili realized that he and his comrade were "missing in action" and thus able to "stay in the West without jeopardizing the

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<sup>26</sup> William Lindsay White, "Land of Milk and Honey," *Reader's Digest*, May 1949, 136.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 141.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 151.



safety of their families in Russia.”<sup>29</sup> “For weeks,” White continued, “he had known in his heart that he really wanted to live in the Western World. But now that a chance had come, every Russian face he had loved came out of the fog, calling him back.”<sup>30</sup> In the end, however, the words of the girl enslaved by the Soviet secret police, echoed in his head: “‘Oh, dear, Vasili, go now, go forever.’”

The second selection from *Land of Milk and Honey* emphasized similar themes as the first: Vasili chose to live in the western world as a result of the closed, secretive, and suspicious nature of Soviet society, and the impressions left upon him by the purges of the pre-war years left him fearful of his own government. In contrast to the positive portrait of Russia painted by Marcet Haldeman in 1933, White’s assessment of the Russian people in 1945 revealed many commonalities with Americans, outside of communism. White’s *Land of Milk and Honey* illustrated through Vasili’s experiences in school and his successful college education a desire for self-improvement and focused on the superiority of an American system that allowed him to achieve his dreams. Through Vasili’s eager adoption of capitalistic principles, White showed how Russians could flourish under an open and honest governmental system.

White further highlighted the experience of foreigners in the United States in an article titled “Home Was Never Like This,” which appeared in *United Nations World* in December 1951 and a month later in *Reader’s Digest* as “The Way We Look to Them.” Through the comments of specific students, White asserted that “these foreign students see us through fresh eyes, sometimes with disturbing clarity. And they agree that certain American customs and ways of thinking, which we take for granted, are unique on this globe.”<sup>31</sup> Analysis and content do not differ significantly from one version of the article to another, though the condensed *Reader’s*

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<sup>29</sup> White, “Land of Milk and Honey,” 155.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid.

<sup>31</sup> William Lindsay White, “The Way We Look to Them,” *Reader’s Digest*, September, 1951, 16-17.

*Digest* version omits some specific anecdotes. White concluded that “whatever criticism you may coax out of these foreign students, without exception they return to our kindness, which in its abundance they insist is unique on this globe.”<sup>32</sup>

White more directly addressed the potential for American strength to increase through foreign students in “Foreign Students: An Opportunity,” which appeared in *Reader’s Digest* in 1951. White argued that “if you think the impressions of a foreign student do not greatly matter, consider the bright Japanese boy who a half century ago, worked his way through Oregon University, graduating with an L.L.B. with honors at 20.” By all accounts he appeared like any other student, he “in many ways he liked us (he spoke our college slang without an accent) and when he was later elected to the Japanese parliament, they called him ‘the Delegate from Oregon.’” His experience in Oregon, however, had revealed not only the positives of American culture, but also its darker side: “no bright Japanese boy could have missed the strong prejudice against Orientals which then gripped our West Coast.” White concluded his anecdote with the somber assertion that “the Delegate from Oregon presently turned violently anti-American. It was this same Yosuke Matsuoka who became his country’s Foreign Minister in 1940, as Japan moved toward Pearl Harbor.”<sup>33</sup> According to White, exposure to American society had the power to transform foreign students into consumers of American goods and ideas, or enemies.

### **Using the Public Sphere to Spread a Message**

White hoped to use his platform to oppose communist advances within American society, refashion the historical record, and advocate for positive social change within America. “The Story of a Smear,” which appeared in *Reader’s Digest* in 1951, argued that the Bonus March

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<sup>32</sup> White, “The Way We Look to Them,” 19.

<sup>33</sup> White, “Foreign Students: An Opportunity,” *Reader’s Digest*, September, 1951, 113.

Army in 1932 had been the result of a communist insurrection. White asserted that “recent confessions of John Pace and other communists have explained how half a dozen concealed communists were able to manipulate the confused veterans into violence.” White’s article not only sought to illuminate communist influence but also to spread a history that “cleanses several farsighted American leaders of a vicious smear, which was no less a Communist objective than the bloodshed.”<sup>34</sup>

White warned of a shift toward collectivism not only within public memory but also within the behavior of ordinary Americans. White’s March 1952 *Reader’s Digest* article, “‘On the Country’ –Then and Now” expresses criticism of developments in American society and demonstrates his use of his hometown of Emporia as a model. White described changes in the process of governmental aid disbursement and lamented, “The old self-respect is melting.” He further explained, “[b]eing ‘on the county’ is becoming a recognized profession. Caseworkers say that youngsters brought up at a county expense . . . ‘come and apply for all they can get, instead of looking for jobs.’”<sup>35</sup> In a straightforward, three-page article, White enunciated his expectations of hard work and self-reliance within the American people.

Not all of White’s articles during this period focused on the negative, however. As American soldiers transitioned into civilian life, the type of character White wrote about shifted slightly but continued to embody self-reliance, assertiveness, and patriotism. Written in 1955, “Brains on Easy Payment,” which in a later incarnation was entitled “The Human Brain: Your Best Investment,” analyzed the burgeoning practice of financing college via loans. In the first version, White opened the story by chronicling the impact of a scholarship at Harvard University

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<sup>34</sup> William Lindsay White, “The Story of a Smear,” *Reader’s Digest*. December 1951. 49.

<sup>35</sup> William Lindsay White, “On the Country”—Then and Now,” *Reader’s Digest*, March 1952, 110-13.

started by enterprising “newsboys” in Boston, MA, and the experiences of Sam Levine.<sup>36</sup> White wrote that in order to supplement the scholarship, which “was only for the first year . . . because being a newsboy, he would look out for himself” Levine “tutored, waited tables at Randall Hall, and so not only paid his expenses” but also achieved the flexibility to “lend money to my more aristocratic classmates, who ran short before their allowances came.”<sup>37</sup> Levine, who went on to graduate with an undergraduate and medical degree from Harvard, maintained the frugality of his newsboy roots throughout his life.

In fact, Levine expressed a desire to contribute back the funds that had paid for his education. Levine told White that “I felt it was my primary obligation” and though of limited means during his initial forays into medical practice he was able to accomplish this “by doing without . . . by driving an old car, for instance. First things come first.”<sup>38</sup> As a result of this approach White noted,

by the time he was 10 years out of school he had repaid not only that first silver quarter, but every other dollar of help he had got from Harvard.”<sup>39</sup> Though White used Sam Levine specifically to exemplify the success of the newsboy scholarship at Harvard, in totality he reported that out of forty young men who were sent to Harvard as a result of the scholarship “all but three managed to stay on and graduate, many with honors. At least 13 continued to professional schools and this group produced 3 doctors, 2 lawyers, and 5 teachers.”<sup>40</sup>

Levine’s story allows White to emphasize the self-sufficiency and resourcefulness of the young men who benefited from the newsboy fund. Overall, his article argued that in direct contrast to the dependent behavior of Emporians, and the notion of government sponsored education he toyed with in 1934, changes in financing of college education that placed more of the cost upon

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<sup>36</sup> William Lindsay White, “Brains on Easy Payment,” May 25, 1955. In William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>37</sup> Ibid.

<sup>38</sup> Ibid.

<sup>39</sup> Ibid.

<sup>40</sup> Ibid.

the individual resulted in positive changes among the student body. Levine pointed out, and White emphasized this contention, that “if a college degree is a fine investment, why should not more of its cost be borne by those who benefit?” Moreover, Levine asked, “Is any boy worth educating who is not eager to repay if he can.”<sup>41</sup> Through increasing the burden of college financing on the individual student, White envisioned that it would “welcome into America’s top colleges a new type of student: the able, earnest boy, depending less on his family and relying more on himself, viewing his college education not as a gift from others but as an obligation.” Rather than view college as a right, or as just the next step in life, this eager student will see it as an opportunity for “which he will be able and proud to repay.”<sup>42</sup> In this statement, essentially, White described his ideal young college-bound male. This young American would demonstrate frugality, self-discipline, honesty, and determination. Holding consistent with his other works, White’s view of the college funding process emphasized equal opportunity only for those willing to work and bear accompanying responsibility. In a manner similar to his depiction of soldiers fighting in World War II, White believed that college students should be able to rely solely on themselves to make the sacrifices needed for success. Even though the charity of Bostonians had given Levine the boost he needed to enroll at Harvard, it was his tenacity, hard work, and determination that paid back their charity several times over. To extrapolate, White used “Brains on Easy Payment” and “The Human Brain: Your Best Investment” to enunciate his overall view that reliance upon anyone, or anything, including the state, only weakened an individual. Though he and Haldeman-Julius differed greatly in their approach towards collectivism and government intervention, both shared a passion for education. In addition, White’s belief in the ability of

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<sup>41</sup> William Lindsay White, “Brains on Easy Payment.” William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid.

African Americans to benefit from education and their inherent capability echoed Franklin's belief in education as a pathway toward equality.

Further emphasizing self-reliance and the importance of education, White's 1956 article "400,000 Boys are Members of the Club" trumpeted the virtues of Boy's Club organizations that provided a sense of community for urban boys. White opened the article with a boy named Red, who stood on the cusp of a life of crime when happenstance directed him into the Boy's Club. White explained that Red's experience with the Boy's Club had turned him away from criminality and toward becoming a productive citizen.<sup>43</sup> Throughout the article, White highlighted the positive impact of the Boy's Club. He wrote "Boy's Clubs do more than just keep their members out of trouble, they lay the groundwork for healthy, law-abiding lives –and for remarkable accomplishment."<sup>44</sup> Additionally, he observed the Boy's Club standing in for absent fathers and providing guidance to troubled youths much like the club had for Red.<sup>45</sup> Thus, White valued the club's contribution to American prosperity by molding young men into members of society who had personal pride and an appreciation for honest work.

Through this article, White continued to emphasize the importance of self-reliance and occupational success as he did during World War II. In fact, his article closes with a reference to the war. "When tough kids jeer that Boy's Clubs are strictly for sissies," he wrote, "Boston gives them this to chew on: In World War II, servicemen from Boston's Boys' Club won medals for bravery at a rate 500 percent higher than the national average. How much tougher can you get?"<sup>46</sup> Clearly, White admired the ability of Boy's Clubs to prepare young men for future roles

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<sup>43</sup> William Lindsay White, "400,000 Boys are Members of the Club," *Reader's Digest*. February 1956, 72.

<sup>44</sup> Michael S. Kimmel, *Manhood in America: A Cultural History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996), 156. Kimmel asserts that during the 1950s American society believed failure to adequately demonstrate masculinity resulted in juvenile delinquency.

<sup>45</sup> William Lindsay White, "400,000 Boys are Members of the Club," 76.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, 77.

in society, and he also realized that the persona of World War II soldiers remained important for men in the 1950s. Through continued access to the network of *Reader's Digest* readers, White enjoyed broad distribution and a platform to express his personal vision for America. In a manner similar to both Haldeman-Julius and Franklin, White used his writing to highlight qualities he felt were important and urge their adoption by everyday Americans.

### **An Emporia Authority**

From a medium-sized Kansas town, William Lindsay White established a national reputation. Three young men from the Saint Francis Preparatory Academy in Brooklyn, New York, wrote to White in 1955. An assignment required them to write to the author of a book they had read; all three had chosen to write to White after reading *They Were Expendable*. John Costello wrote, "It is a splendid book which shows the extreme courage of our Armed Forces in the bloody and dirty World War II." He continued, "I am glad that men like you write about the exploits of our men and women which otherwise would never be known by the public."<sup>47</sup> Expressing similar sentiment, Edward White praised the book as "a thrilling, adventurous story, and the fact that the story is true makes it even more exciting."<sup>48</sup> Finally, Kevin E. Gallagher told White that he "found the book exciting and interesting. The book never had a dull moment. The book gave people an idea of the work of 'P.T.' boats and their importance during the war."<sup>49</sup> The comments of the three indicate that, thirteen years after its initial publication, *They Were Expendable* the book continued to find a receptive nation-wide audience.

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<sup>47</sup> John Costello to William Lindsay White, 25 May 1955. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>48</sup> Edward White to William Lindsay White, 25 May 1955. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>49</sup> Kevin E. Gallagher to William Lindsay White, 25 May 1955. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

The boys writing to White admired his story and probably sought a similar adventure of their own. Beyond popularity, White's writing also earned him an air of authority. In 1958, the State Department, as part of its Distinguished Visitors program, asked White to host Indian visitors in his hometown of Emporia, "to give them a close view of an average American small town – not rich, and not poor." Emporia boasted a modest population in 1958 and fell within the middle ground of all Kansas cities.<sup>50</sup> Thus, not only did White broadly observe the reaction of foreigners to the United States, but he also directly participated in demonstrating America's strength. He stated that "neither of our guests had been out of India before. Through the reactions of visitors – A. K. Jain, editor of *Nav Bharat*, and B. B. Bhatnager, editor of the *Saptahik Hindustan* – whom White described as "highly educated and courteous men," White emphasized advantages found in America that Americans often took for granted. He explained that "they went up one side of Commercial Street and down the other, and said that the shops carried things of a quality to be found only in a few of India's largest cities."<sup>51</sup> White's visitors also "were puzzled to find out that, in a town where the people seemed so well-dressed, there was not a single tailor, that all the clothes were made by machine." Moreover, "they marveled at a theater into which one could drive a car and see the picture without getting out. They wondered if enough people had cars in Delhi to make such a venture pay."<sup>52</sup>

In addition to the relatively prosperous economy of Emporia, the inclusivity and egalitarian nature of American society impressed the Indian guests. White scheduled a sit down meeting with Mayor Grover Piper and both visitors "later explained that they had been greatly bewildered. Both had thought from the way the man was dressed, that he must be of the sweeper

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<sup>50</sup> William Lindsay White, "India Sees Main Street," *Reader's Digest*, October 1958, 111. According to the 1960 U.S. Census, Emporia was a town of 18,190 residents.

<sup>51</sup> William Lindsay White, "India Sees Main Street," 113.

<sup>52</sup> *Ibid.*, 111-112.



caste – one whose job is to scrub floors and open doors for people who to meet the mayor.”

Mayor Piper fell short of visual expectations, but “their first surprise was to find that such a man could be mayor of so rich a city. Their second surprise was to find him so kindly and intelligent – asking them keen questions about their land.” Mayor Piper impressed the visitors and indicated to them that America embraced the capabilities of all types of people, a far cry from their initial impressions of America and popular opinion in India. When they “were told the people had done it [elected Mayor Piper] They said this would hardly be believed in India, where many think of America as a capitalist plutocracy.”<sup>53</sup>

White’s “India Sees Main Street” allowed him to simultaneously showcase American values and Emporia. The article bolstered both his connection to Emporia and his position within the national public sphere. After reading the article, Pfc. Enoch Gregory wrote to White asking about the racial situation in the Midwest. He explained that “I’m a Southern-born Negro” who has “spent about half of my life above the Mason-Dixon line, but find the Eastern section lacking many of the things that I want in the town that I finally choose to make home.” Gregory explained that though “it is true that the big cities are not segregated, that there’s almost unlimited freedom of access to places as long as one can afford them,” he wanted ultimately “a small town where people are people, and discrimination because of race is at a minimum.”<sup>54</sup> As a result of his unhappiness, Gregory inquired “could it be that the Midwest is different?” In reply, White briefly described the town of Emporia – “we are a town of about 15,000 with a Presbyterian College and State Teachers College, two high schools and a Junior High School.” In addition, he noted that we are a division point on the Santa Fe Railroad and have several thriving

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<sup>53</sup> White, “India Sees Main Street,” 112-113.

<sup>54</sup> Enoch Gregory to William Lindsay White. 3 November 1958. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

industries.”<sup>55</sup> White also detailed the relationship between white Emporians and its small number of African Americans (White estimated population at 400). He highlighted the opportunities for African Americans in Emporia and the lack of any “official bar” to their ability to eat in the restaurants, shop in any store, and work at any business. Yet he cautioned that any prejudice present might just be unofficial. He asserted “very possibly the local Negroes do not come there [fine restaurants] because they feel – rightly or wrongly – that they would be made to feel unwelcome.” He acknowledged that “very frankly I don’t know. One of our local Negroes undoubtedly could tell you in half a minute just where this wavering and uncertain color line stretches; it’s something that a white man seldom finds out.”<sup>56</sup>

White’s letter also featured two anecdotal bits of optimism. First, he explained that the *Emporia Gazette* employed an African American as a pressman. Though he admitted he had been “a little jittery” about how the other employees might react because of “sharing toilets, drinking fountains and towels . . . there had been no trouble whatever.” This interracial work environment occurred not only at the *Gazette* but was “standard all over town.”<sup>57</sup> In addition, White told Gregory that several years before, his paper had planned on doing a story highlighting the relationship between the races in Emporia but “some of my older Negro friends came in in considerable panic. They said they knew I meant well by them, but that any story however sympathetic – would only set them back” by drawing attention to the permissive climate. Ultimately, White cautioned Gregory that “since some separation of the two races definitely does exist on the pure social level . . . you might have a hard time finding, among, these 400, enough close friends of your age and intelligence.” White closed with the idea that within Emporia “the

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<sup>55</sup> Letter from William Lindsay White to Enoch Gregory. 3 December 1958. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>56</sup> Letter from William Lindsay White to Enoch Gregory. 3 December 1958. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>57</sup> Ibid.

situation is not bad [and] Emporia is not unique or unusual in the Middle West.” He recommended that Gregory find a friend in his unit or another unit who came from the region and inquire about his hometown. White’s interaction with Pfc. Gregory proved once again that he served not only a national figure that concerned Americans sought out for advice but also as an ambassador for Emporia. White offered an even-keeled assessment rather than partisan hometown cheerleading of Emporia and its race relations. His concern for Pfc. Gregory showed consistency with his career-long philosophy of individual freedom and correct decision making through proper information. This focus on local race relations, and somber evaluation, echoed the effort of Marcet Haldeman-Julius in 1933. Moreover, White’s correspondence with Gregory illustrates the comingling of an ideological community via *Reader’s Digest* and the connection between White and his hometown.

### **An American Example**

White’s ability to connect with a broad American audience allowed him to focus on figures who embodied the American experience. His treatment of Bernard Baruch and his correspondence with him further indicates how White hoped his writing could bring about positive change in America. Baruch had been an active figure within politics, high finance, and public life for the better part of fifty years. He had grown personally wealthy in the stock market, successfully preserved his own wealth and the wealth of clients through market fluctuation, served his country on the War Industry Board during World War I, forged a personal relationship with political luminaries such as Woodrow Wilson, and spearheaded America’s cadre of representatives to the United Nations Atomic Energy Commission.<sup>58</sup> The characterization of

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<sup>58</sup> William Lindsay White, “Bernard Baruch: Portrait of a Citizen,” *Reader’s Digest*, October 1959, 167-180.

Baruch in *Bernard Baruch: Portrait of a Citizen* and in the condensed version which first appeared in *Reader's Digest* told the story of “a man who *won* most ‘gambles’ by plain hard work.”<sup>59</sup> White demonstrated the tenacious work ethic of Baruch by chronicling Baruch’s rise from humble beginnings to the pinnacle of success. White wrote that following an early business setback, Baruch took an entry level position on Wall Street and “in supposedly leisure hours he was studying law and bookkeeping in night school.”<sup>60</sup> This dedication to hard work proved, alongside rugged self-reliance, a hallmark of Baruch’s professional life. Prior to beginning his research, White wrote to Baruch that “a man who confronted . . . a hysterically inflated market” and in response “takes a bearish position which tends both to prevent a further rise and to cushion the drop, performs a far more useful service to the Republic than the W.P.A. case workers who later salvaged the debris of the wreck he tried to prevent.”<sup>61</sup>

Further explaining to his motivation for centering on Baruch, White asserted, “[He] came to manhood in a vigorous, expanding, self-assured and on the whole extremely healthy era both in the history of this Republic and of the world, which is now suffering a sea-change, into something new and strange.”<sup>62</sup> White added that the world “has become curiously fear frozen” and that men “no longer dared to aspire highly but instead want the security of statism.”<sup>63</sup> White hoped that through the life story of Baruch “the generation which has come to manhood in this era of what I hope is ‘premature senility’ could look back, through the medium of your life story, at the world when it was young and brave.”<sup>64</sup> Moreover, Baruch provided an example of “a man

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<sup>59</sup> *New York Times*, New York, NY: September 22, 1950.

<sup>60</sup> William Lindsay White, “Bernard Baruch: Portrait of a Citizen,” 169.

<sup>61</sup> William Lindsay White to Bernard Baruch, 16 January 1950. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*

who has lived a vigorous, joyous, and essentially a socially useful life.”<sup>65</sup> The public persona of Baruch presented a figure through that White emphasized hard work, self-reliance, and unwavering loyalty to country. In the final paragraph of the selection which appeared in *Reader's Digest*, White wrote that Baruch's “hope is that our youth will regain the rugged self-confidence and integrity we had in the era of his boyhood.” White echoed this sentiment and expressed his own optimism that America's youth “remember that this government is the best in the world. Improve it, but guard it well, and don't lean too heavily on it. You can and *must do for yourself*.”<sup>66</sup>

Combined with other stories he wrote during this period, White harkened back to the qualities he had emphasized during World War II and had continued to explore. White hoped to influence America, but his agenda-driven writing contrasted with Haldeman-Julius's work, both politically and strategically. Rather than use his public platform to problematize American political and social relations, and lambast all levels of society with vitriolic criticism, White chose characters who embodied the qualities he valued and used his writing to amplify the positive. This strategy allowed him to tap into an existing ideologically unified audience and proved a more successful and enduring method of fulfilling the role of social prognosticator.

### **Courting Controversy**

Amplifying the positive did not mean White shied away from societal criticism. He routinely tackled controversial subjects and took tough stances on hot-button political issues. Unlike the other figures considered in this study, however, White lacked a free rein for

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<sup>65</sup> Ibid.

<sup>66</sup> William Lindsay White, “Bernard Baruch: Portrait of a Citizen,” 180. Emphasis in the original.

nationwide ideological expression. In 1958, *Digest* editor Kenneth Payne told White that a story he had written linking organized labor and inflation would not be printed. He explained that

in view of the research criticisms, I am convinced that it would be risky to publish the piece in this form . . . we cannot afford to take any chance at all that the article might misfire and be subject to unanswerable charges from labor that it was at various critical points, inaccurate or misrepresentative of facts.<sup>67</sup>

The letter from Payne also stressed that while the magazine wanted to publish White's article, the research department had to be 100 percent certain his writing was factual. In other words, White had been denied publication because the article might have caused controversy and been unable to withstand public scrutiny.<sup>68</sup> In response to Payne's letter, White admitted that "although in some cases I take issue with Research, in general I am very glad they did so tight a job on it, for it is far better to be safe than sorry."<sup>69</sup> A few months later, however, he wrote to Paul Palmer, another *Digest* editor, concerning the impact of research upon his writing. White asserted that "sometimes [it] has seemed to me that there was sometimes apt to be an unconscious political bias in Research. And that whenever I submitted a strongly right-of-center article, those kids took a peculiar delight in tearing hell out of it."<sup>70</sup> He did not ultimately suggest that the research process had negatively impacted his stories; in fact, he said that their bias could work to the magazine's benefit because it made the finished project even more immune to criticism. He urged Palmer, however, to not allow researchers to "have the final say. The writer

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<sup>67</sup> Kenneth Payne to William Lindsay White, 2 July 1958. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. Also see Kenneth Payne to William Lindsay White, 3 July 1958. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>68</sup> For examples of White's nationally published work on labor see "Should Unions Have Monopoly Powers?" *Reader's Digest*, August 1955, 33-42; "Strike Without End – The Kohler Story." *Reader's Digest*, October 1957, 91-98; "The Right to Work: Our Hottest Labor Issue." *Reader's Digest*, August, 1958, 32-37; "Why Should Labor Leaders Play Politics with the Workers' Money?" *Reader's Digest*, October 1958, 157-164; "The Strike Nobody Won." *Reader's Digest*, September 1963, 155-162.

<sup>69</sup> William Lindsay White to Kenneth Payne, 14 July 1958. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>70</sup> William Lindsay White to Paul Palmer, 20 December 1958. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

should know what changes or deletions they propose to make. And if he thinks they are unwarranted he should have the right to appeal to a Senior editor, or some other Vicar of God Almighty.”<sup>71</sup> Unlike Haldeman-Julius or Franklin, White did not have unfettered access to the national public sphere. He had to appease a series of editors and supervisors before his writing appeared nationally.

Despite the tense rumblings between White and the research department, during the late 1950s White’s relationship with *Reader’s Digest* proved extremely fruitful. He told DeWitt Wallace in 1958 that, “I have a bale of really wonderful and moving letters. . . . most of them are earnest, intelligent, eloquent hand-written accounts of abuses in local unions which they are forced to join, and asking me won’t I please help them by writing a story.”<sup>72</sup> White continued to heap praises upon the magazine because of the boost it gave his writing. Reader reaction “is the thing which really makes writing worthwhile, particularly for the Digest where you catch a mass audience with whatever you have to say.”<sup>73</sup> White’s work gave him a sense of personal satisfaction and he felt as though it allowed him to have an impact on his readers. He explained to Wallace:

for a writer, getting paid is the lesser part of his recompense; more important is the feeling, which you can only get from your readers, that somehow you may have changed the World a little for the better, that what you wrote may have helped the American people think more clearly on an important issue. Or perhaps you have added a mite to our American culture.<sup>74</sup>

The widespread distribution White gained through the *Digest*, however, depended on his ability to remain in the good graces of editors and researchers. During this period he also stayed focused on changes in his Kansas hometown and on his independent *Gazette* platform.

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<sup>71</sup> Ibid.

<sup>72</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 20 September 1958. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid.

## White in the 1960s

The 1960s were a tumultuous time in America, not only due to race relations but also because of the shifting relationship between business and government. In 1964, the city of Emporia decided to employ a relatively new method of attracting business, the Industrial Revenue Bond, and a controversy developed over tax exemptions for businesses. The city hoped to lure Interstate Bakery to the west side of town. Proponents touted the increase of local jobs, the corresponding boost to the overall local economy, and Emporia's need to use any and all inducements to ensure the factory's arrival. White, however, did not share this vision for Emporia and used his newspaper to actively campaign against the plan and the general practice of Industrial Revenue Bonds.<sup>75</sup>

On January 18, 1965, White explained to *Emporia Gazette* readers that issuing these types of bonds gave communities the power to "exempt business firms from paying any local taxes for 10 years." He added that though many legislators who voted for the creation of this legal loophole only intended it to be used for new businesses, the final law allowed current companies to gain tax exemptions. Moreover, this "the tax-dodging feature of the law seems to have strong backing from the State Chamber of Commerce and the Kansas Industrial Development Commission."<sup>76</sup>

White's February 1 front-page *Gazette* editorial cast him as the defender of the people. Entitled "Your Hoarse Watch-dog," the article maintained that "by tradition the press is supposed to be the watchdog of the community" and "fulfilling its duties as watch-dog, this

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<sup>75</sup> Jernigan, 259-262. He states that the community became so divided that long-time friends were split and that many in Emporia resented White and "years of pent-up citizen resentment about Young Bill's paternalism surfaced in a verbal hate campaign that characterized him as an eccentric suitcase editor who used Emporia for an occasional rest cure and the *Gazette* as a source of easy money."

<sup>76</sup> William Lindsay White, "A Short History of Tax-dodging." *Emporia Gazette*. Jan 18, 1965. Also see William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 20 May 1965. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. White tells Wallace that these bonds represent "a nasty little tax-dodgers gimmick which violates every principle of sound government I know of."



newspaper has been barking and yapping, so long and so hard about what Industrial bonds may do to this town, that we are now hoarse.” Because the press should accurately reflect the will of the people, White explained “a fearful thought has struck us: suppose nobody in this town or county really cares but us?” Perhaps, he ruminated, “tax dodging has become a status symbol so that people struggle to sit next to the tax dodger at his lunch club . . . it could be that tax dodging is the Way of the Future and that we should change the motto of our state . . . to AD ASTRA PER TAX DODGING.”<sup>77</sup> To gauge the will of the town, the *Gazette* distributed a postcard ballot asking whether community members agreed with the actions of the Emporia City Commission and whether the Industrial Bonds should be used for new and existing businesses. White’s editorial concluded with

if a majority, however small, vote ‘yes’ in this poll, we hereby and hereon pledge ourselves to stop yawping. For that will mean that the people in this town, having been thoroughly exposed to the facts, really think Emporia can grow by passing out tax exemptions, and do not think that an increase in taxes is too much to pay.”<sup>78</sup>

Over the next several months, the *Emporia Gazette* reported the results of the poll and published letters on both sides of the issue, allowing the people of Emporia to debate the issue.

Interestingly, comments that were returned to the newspaper offices were published, often including names and addresses, and expressed strong sentiment on both sides of the issue.

Emporians praised and condemned White’s efforts.<sup>79</sup> White continued to publish editorials criticizing the practice, he gave publicity to City Commission candidates who opposed bonds, and he warned of the dire consequences of tax-exemptions.<sup>80</sup> Despite White’s vociferous opposition, and his straw poll that “indicated 60% of the town was what I expected and hoped it would be – the solid, conservative, sensible old town I had always known – opposed to bringing

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<sup>77</sup> William Lindsay White, “A Short History of Tax-dodging.” *Emporia Gazette*. Jan 18, 1965. 4.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid.

<sup>79</sup> William Lindsay White, “Response to Straw Poll is Surprising.” *Emporia Gazette*. February 6, 1965.

<sup>80</sup> William Lindsay White. “Now the People May Speak!” February 15, 1965.

factories with tax-exemptions to come in,” local election results favored Commission candidates who supported the issuance of Industrial Bonds for Interstate Bakery. White’s attempt to use his local platform to influence his community failed. The political rumblings in Emporia left him momentarily disillusioned about his hometown and eager to return to *Digest* work. Later in his career, he again focused on the local community, with greater success.

The bond controversy in Emporia led White to focus more directly on economic issues during the mid-1960s. To espouse his anti-inflation views, White used national outlets like *Reader’s Digest* and also published editorials in the *Emporia Gazette*. A 1966 piece garnered significant praise. Reader G. R. Field wrote asking White’s personal opinion on inflation. White explained that “I am neither in favor of inflation (it steals from creditors) or deflation (it steals from debtors) but for a stable currency which would keep our general price level on an even keel and is fair to all.”<sup>81</sup> Admiration for White’s anti-inflation stance came not only from local readers but also from influential political figures. In September 1966, Richard Nixon told White, “I thought you would be interested to know that he [former President Eisenhower] spoke in glowing terms of your article in The Reader’s Digest on inflation.” Nixon explained that “while I know you did not intend it to be a political document, it provides excellent campaign ammunition for those of us who are trying to make Johnson prices a major issue.”<sup>82</sup> Nixon repeatedly expressed support for White’s editorial positions. After reading another of White’s vitriolic anti-inflation articles in the *Emporia Gazette*, Nixon wrote in October 1966, “I only wish your statement could be read and understood by every American, especially the argument that ‘price must rise’ if you pump a surplus of dollars into the economy through deficits and easy credit.” Nixon asserted that “to pump added dollars into the economy and denounce the

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<sup>81</sup> William Lindsay White to G. R. Field. 18 August 1966. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>82</sup> Ibid.

subsequent rise in prices is like pumping an otherwise healthy fellow full of heroin and then deploring his unorthodox conduct.”<sup>83</sup>

While White had more latitude to pursue topics of personal interest during the later years of his career, White’s continued relationship with *Reader’s Digest* required that he meet their deadlines and provide copy on subjects Wallace and others deemed important. Even though readers expressed interest in reading more of White’s inflation analysis, his responsibilities for *Reader’s Digest* took him in another direction. In 1966, he explained to Bond Wheelright, who had written and asked about expanding the article into a full-length manuscript, that “I could expand it but this would take some time and, frankly, I have decided that I don’t have the time. Or rather, Reader’s Digest decided it for me for they want me to leave almost immediately now to go to France and then probably to India and Japan.”<sup>84</sup> White’s anti-inflation articles and editorials, as well as his inability to publish a full-length book on the subject, provide evidence that unlike Haldeman-Julius and Franklin, who had complete free rein over what they could publish, White had to find a balance between occupational duties and personal causes. His economic prescription for America, however, falls firmly in line with the vision he had for American society. The individual represented a check against overreaching governmental power and short-term gain should never outweigh long-term stability.

### **Another Look Abroad**

In 1967, White believed that the world had profoundly changed since he traveled throughout Russia and Germany in the 1940s, and as the locus of conflict shifted, he again

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<sup>83</sup> William Lindsay White to G. R. Field. 18 August 1966. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>84</sup> Bond Wheelright to William Lindsay White. 17 August 1966. And William Lindsay White to Bond Wheelright. 21 September 1966. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

needed to inform himself and his readers about foreign locales and the United States' strength. He noted that "as World War II was closing the late Henry R. Luce proudly trumpeted the beginning of The American Century," however, "twenty years later the country was tied down in the most unpopular war of our time, seemingly on the verge of bankruptcy, its price level on a dangerously steepening upward curve, its gold draining away."<sup>85</sup>

White embarked on a tour of Asian nations including India, Taiwan, Vietnam, and Singapore, to diagnose and to inform American readers about the causes and impact of worldwide events. He explained to readers that "my wife Katherine, and I are in Paris on our way to Asia, and most particularly to Vietnam, to get a different perspective on Vietnam and to get some idea of where the United States now stands in the world." Unlike his earlier trips to Russia, Germany, and Poland, where he pursued assignments and stories as a roving reporter for *Reader's Digest*, the *Emporia Gazette*, funded his travels to Asia and published his observations. Frequent correspondence between White and DeWitt Wallace and Hobart Lewis reveals that White hoped some of the material might find a way into *Reader's Digest*. White pursued stories he thought the *Digest* might find interesting, and told Wallace and Lewis that "while I was writing the Viet Nam material, I went out after it in my spare time. But I was careful not to impose on the Digest staff here while gathering it." He further explained that "in Delhi I had met two Hong Kong editors (both Chinese) [and] my main source here has been the A.P. who, because they know me (the *Gazette* is an AP paper) always are helpful, and also highly dependable."<sup>86</sup> White's journalistic skill and personal ownership of a daily newspaper allowed him greater latitude in investigation, a smaller but more loyal audience, and the opportunity to pursue stories of personal interest.

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<sup>85</sup> William Lindsay White. *Report on the Asians*. Reynal and Company, New York: 1969. 3.

<sup>86</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace and Hobart Lewis. Undated. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. Also see Jernigan, 263.

## A Familiar Tale

White used his trip through Asia to provide readers with unique aspects of the physical surroundings, mood, and location, Much as he had while overseas in the 1940s. He expressed astonishment at the updated surroundings and orderly operation of Tokyo, writing “In any land the airport tells you something of what is to come. Here in Tokyo, how clean and modern in metals and textures of wood the airport is! How smartly uniformed, efficient, and smilingly polite the Japanese officials.” White described Taiwan as “neat as a park with planted terraces rising far up the sides of mountains, every inch cultivated as it must be if this banana-shaped island, about 150 miles long, is to feed its 13 million people.” He added that “Taiwan has roughly the size and population density of the Netherlands. Because the island is well watered and on about the latitude of Key West, Florida, anything will grow at any time of year.”<sup>87</sup>

Asia exposed White to a region throwing off the yoke of colonialism and beginning to assert economic and political independence. In Thailand, White described “the roar of pneumatic drills and hammers where apartment houses, office buildings, and air-conditioned hotels are under construction.” The country’s building boom impressed White, especially that Thailand’s growth stemmed from private investment. He wrote, “Unlike poor India, this country staggers under no compulsion to be self-sufficient to pour tax money into locomotive works, automobile factories, and atomic-energy plants.” Unlike some other locations on his trip, “foreign firms are not feared as neo-colonial exploiters. Businessmen who want to move in are welcome, either to manufacture or sell products made abroad.”<sup>88</sup>

The type, effectiveness, and relative strengths and weaknesses of each domestic government became a prevalent topic in White’s *Report on the Asians*. On one hand, this seems

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<sup>87</sup> White, *Report on the Asians*, 231.

<sup>88</sup> *Ibid.*, 104.

logical because it helped provide information about the conditions that dominated foreign countries and because it helped differentiate other countries from the United States. Yet, on the other hand, White's focus on governmental structure allowed him to emphasize the potential of capitalism and free enterprise to achieve prosperity. Moreover, White used governmental attitudes toward free expression and individuality to separate potential American allies from future enemies.

White observed that the Hong Kong population remained deeply divided between practical considerations, which drove them to nominally support Chinese ideas, and intrinsic desires, which sought freer economic and social exchanges. White noted that the residents of Hong Kong were "98% of them Chinese and 98% anti-Communist . . . they choose Hong Kong because living standards are far higher; hundreds of thousands have risked their lives to get to Hong Kong in recent years." Despite this shift in population, the residents of Hong Kong "do not dare to be publicly anti-Communist . . . they know that in the event of a takeover an anti-communist record of any kind would doom them."<sup>89</sup> White found solidarity between himself and the people he observed through common human bonds and the intrinsic desire for free expression and prosperity.

White pointed to the prosperity of Hong Kong as an example of what free thought, stable government, and a loosening of trade restrictions can accomplish within Asia:

What the British have done is to give Hong Kong orderly government under Free Enterprise, which has released the creative powers of the Industrious and talented Chinese people so that they can go ahead and build factories, office buildings, create a great and beautiful city. It proves what the Mainland could be like if the Chinese could live and work under similar conditions.<sup>90</sup>

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<sup>89</sup> William Lindsay White to Phoebe Larmore, undated. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

White used Hong Kong's prosperity, along with that of Japan and Thailand, to argue that the ability to prosper depended not upon race, but rather upon circumstance. Within a free-market, capitalistic economy, all people could prosper.

While in communist China, White again asserted the evils of a society that relied upon censorship and stifled the flow of knowledge. He argued that "the greatest permanent damage has come in the closing of her schools – her universities for more than two years and her lower schools longer . . . all old textbooks are banned. New ones reflecting the Cultural Revolution are being printed, and they seem to ignore China's past before Mao and reject, as well, 'bourgeois science.' The [impact] to China's future scholars and leaders cannot yet be estimated."<sup>91</sup>

## Vietnam

The Vietnam War divided American public opinion and raged as the dominant event within Asian cultures in 1967. Battlefield conditions and wartime strategy, however, did not drive White's trip: "I had come not so much to look at the war as at the recently elected Constituent Assembly, to find out what these men, fresh up from the voters, were like, and what the people wanted."<sup>92</sup> Vietnamese politics, particularly, that the southern half of the country might enact governmental reforms, particularly interested White. Before his trip, White sent a letter to Henry Cabot Lodge, then American ambassador to Vietnam, hoping to gain his support and his help in understanding the situation in Vietnam: "I am about to start off on a trip around the world for The Reader's Digest and it occurred to me that there might be a very good story on the political situation in South Viet Nam." White continued, "We were all surprised and over

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<sup>91</sup> White, *Report on the Asians*, 280.

<sup>92</sup> *Ibid.*, 132.

joyed to hear that in the election 80% of the eligible voters went to the polls, but . . . we have heard very little about who they elected, what they are like, and what they want.”<sup>93</sup>

White believed American success in Vietnam hinged on the establishment of a popular central government rather than on any breakthrough military technology. Unfortunately from White’s perspective, when the people of Vietnam voted in 1967 the election did not result in a new civilian government but rather the continuation of military rule. The 1967 election proved pivotal for White’s assessment of the situation in Vietnam. He explained to Henry Cabot Lodge that “I am and always will be a hawk, but feel that I am pecking at a brass wall: We can’t win this thing until the Vietnamese get a government they respect.” Moreover, he felt vindicated because “my diagnosis of the unpopularity of military rule was certainly borne out in the election. The fact that this military government got less than 35% of the votes, was in fact a vote of lack of confidence.”<sup>94</sup> As White’s hope for a new government dissolved, Lodge attempted to convince White otherwise: “I do not think the phrase ‘vote of lack of confidence’, which is a good word in the West, has much applicability in Viet Nam. Thirty-five percent isn’t bad when there are eleven candidates;” nevertheless, White remained pessimistic.<sup>95</sup>

White observed governmental progress, or the lack thereof, within Vietnam broadly, and also shadowed a member of the newly elected Assembly as he traveled back to his home village. This combination of perspectives allowed White a much fuller view of the Vietnamese government. White wrote to Hobart Lewis that “I met a delegate of 31 – just my age when I served in the Kansas legislature – who had been elected by a whopping majority from a district

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<sup>93</sup> William Lindsay White to Henry Cabot Lodge, 12 October 1966. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>94</sup> Letter from William Lindsay White to Henry Cabot Lodge, 25 September 1967. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>95</sup> Letter from Henry Cabot Lodge to William Lindsay White, 6 October 1967. In William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.



in the supposedly-VC-infested Delta.” During his conversation with Danh Thuh, White learned that Thuh planned to travel “back to his district to find out what they expected of a Free Government, impulsively I asked if I could go along.”<sup>96</sup> At the outset of his trip, White reported that “I knew only superficial facts about Danh Thuh. He was handsome, likeable, taller, and a shade browner and less Mongoloid-looking than most Vietnamese,” perhaps more important, he “spoke good English, learned from an American teacher when he was a monk in neighboring Cambodia.”<sup>97</sup> White travelled throughout the Vietnamese countryside with Danh Thuh and “watched these Delta rice farmers looking to their own elected representative to get things done. I said they were reacting to democracy exactly like the people of Kansas.”<sup>98</sup> This belief in the commonality of people and their shared desire for prosperity and peace had a profound influence on White’s thinking in regard to Vietnam.

White’s preoccupation with Vietnam influenced most of his Asian trip. In Japan, White argued that “the Japanese government realizes that the nation’s great strides are possible only because America has shouldered the defense costs of a disarmed Japan.” Additionally, he asserted that “the government realizes that, in Vietnam, we are trying to hold the line against a bit-by-bit take-over by Communism of all Free Asia.”<sup>99</sup>

Back home, and following publication of *Report on the Asians*, White continued to campaign for what he regarded as a more prudent approach to the situation in Vietnam. He corresponded with local readers, lobbied political officials, and in 1969 wrote a memorandum to President Richard Nixon describing the situation in Vietnam and proposing his own solution.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>96</sup> William Lindsay White to Hobart Lewis, 17 March 1967. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>97</sup> White, *Report on the Asians*, 170.

<sup>98</sup> *Ibid.*, 185.

<sup>99</sup> *Ibid.*, 267.

<sup>100</sup> William Lindsay White to Charlie H. Tucker, 6 August 1969. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. This memorandum is virtually identical to the he sends Nixon.

White cautioned Nixon that “no permanent honorable settlement can be achieved in Paris. It must be done out in Vietnam, and it may take two years of skillful planning and some fighting.” White believed that ultimately the situation in Vietnam could be recovered if governmental reforms were enacted and the Americans could win support from the peasantry. He argued that previous elections in South Vietnam had disqualified certain candidates and thus prevented open and fair elections. Though open elections widened the possibility of candidates being elected who opposed continuing the war or were hostile to the United States, White asserted, “I don’t think the Vietnamese would elect many of these but it is far better. . . to have them shouting in a legislature than to have them shooting at you out in a jungle.”<sup>101</sup>

Again, White believed that the key to American success in Vietnam rested upon winning over the peasants. He asserted that peasants “are 70% of the country. The great mass of them are still un-committed. Democracy and Communism are only meaningless foreign words.” Enhanced of Vietnamese farming output, which relied upon new crop strains – White specifically advocated the spread of a type of rice “called ‘Honda’ rice because, using this new seed, you can raise enough rice to buy a Honda” coupled with the distribution of fertilizer to villages loyal to the United States, meant the war could be won, White believed. After all, he told Nixon, “I am a country boy from a farming state. I know what fertilizer can do, and you know what it does in California.”<sup>102</sup>

White’s prescription for ending the Vietnam War might seem facile and naive; however, it reflected his fundamental belief that all people sought freedom and prosperity. With those two things assured, he reasoned, the causes of conflict would disappear. His travels through Asia reveal that even though the *Digest* had gradually begun moving in a different direction and did

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<sup>101</sup> William Lindsay White to Richard M. Nixon, 3 January 1969. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid.

not publish his travel writing as it had in the 1940s, ownership of the *Emporia Gazette* still ensured White a public platform and the ability to set his own publication agenda.

### National Distribution

Though White had hoped his trip to Asia would find a spot in *Reader's Digest*, his writings did not appear in the magazine or go directly to press in book form as had been the case with both *Report on the Russians* and *Report on the Germans*.<sup>103</sup> Instead, White submitted his *Report on the Asians* to various other presses, hoping to find a willing publisher. He had produced a writing he deemed integral to American foreign relations, but it got lost in a flood of works focused on Southeast Asia and U. S. involvement in the region. David McKay Publishers passed on it, asserting, "There are so many books emerging on Asia, and so many news reports coming at us every day on the subject, that they don't see as large a public for THE RIM OF ASIA as they believe he would expect in view of his past successes." Though "obviously there is an audience for anything White writes," the company believed that the readership garnered by White's work "would probably not be as large a one as he usually commands with this material."<sup>104</sup>

By 1967, White's work failed to move the needle of popular opinion in the way it once had, and *Report on the Asians* generated few published reviews. Those that appeared echoed the sentiments of previous reviewers who criticized his American bias and focus. In *Pacific Affairs*, Lisa Hobbs wrote that "it is no easy task to present a clear picture of the extremely complex Asian situation and the peoples involved, but Mr. White does not even try despite the promise of

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<sup>103</sup> Jernigan, 264-265. Jernigan explains that White submitted the material to the *Digest* but they determined it was not sufficient for publication.

<sup>104</sup> Eleanor S. Rawson to Elsie Stern, 20 July 1967. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

the title.” Instead, his work “seems to serve rather as a vehicle for personal reminiscence of travels and meetings with the famous at equally famous hotels, the daily facts of life and sensitivities of the Asians themselves being given short shrift.” She concluded by identifying the market for White’s work: “There are undoubtedly a few old Asian hands who cling to the dogma that there is no problem in Asia that a little American know-how cannot handle.”<sup>105</sup> This and other reviews of White’s work chastised his reliance upon anecdotal evidence and political bias but do not necessarily translate into impropriety or falsifications of information by White. During the later stages of his career, White continued to tackle controversial subjects and express clear opinion despite critical reviews. Ultimately, the negative reception of *Report on the Asians* reflects the changing American social and political climate and the eroding of domestic faith in White’s core values of individualism, self-reliance, and American superiority.

Beyond the politically tinged reaction to White’s work, many of White’s loyal readers commended his ability to clearly communicate information and anecdotes from faraway lands. They sought his opinion on contemporary political issues, asked him to clarify positions he had expressed, and supported his perspectives. Topeka resident Conrad Vandervelde wrote to White in 1967 explaining, “I cannot refrain from expressing my deep appreciation for the superior, clear articles and new information on India brought to us in the Gazette.” Vandervelde continued by stating that “these articles I’ve been sharing with residents including widely traveled folks, one of who is a retired missionary to India whose acquaintance with the area and the people seems pretty intimate.”<sup>106</sup> White expressed relief and gratitude for Vandervelde’s praise, responding “Thank you so much for your charming note which greeted me about the time I

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<sup>105</sup> Lisa Hobbs, *Pacific Affairs*. 43, no. 1 (Spring, 1970), 91-92.

<sup>106</sup> Conrad Vandervelde to William Lindsay White, 15 April 1967. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

arrived here . . . thank God for one clear, non-confused and discriminating brain among the confusion of my readers.”<sup>107</sup>

### Uniting the Community

Despite the controversy surrounding Industrial Bonds in 1965, White maintained his strong connection to Emporia, and his turn away from the *Digest* allowed him to focus again on the local community. He spearheaded a program that collected donations from community members to purchase luxury items to send to soldiers. In 1969, the *Emporia Gazette* published a list of 98 area soldiers who were serving in Vietnam and asked readers to contribute enough to send “a 1-3/4 pound can of Russell Stover candy and 13 oz. can of Planter’s Mixed Nuts” to each. White wrote in Christmas letters to soldiers that after publishing the initial call for donations “we were delighted to find ourselves buried in a flood of checks. Your people back home do care about you.” As a result, “We have enough checks so that you will get, not just one can of candy and another of nuts, scheduled to arrive on Christmas Day, but two additional later mailings, just like it, making a total to you of six cans.”<sup>108</sup>

The gifts came with two requests. White asked soldiers to write thank-you letters, if time allowed, to the family whose contribution paid for the treats. If the family received an update on an Emporia soldier, White vowed to print the soldier’s letters in the *Gazette*. In addition, White’s Christmas message reminded the soldiers “that in every squad there is always one man who does not get anything at all on Christmas – not even a postcard – and is completely forgotten by his

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<sup>107</sup> William Lindsay White to Conrad Vandervelde, 27 April 1967. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>108</sup> William Lindsay White. Christmas letter to soldiers. 22 December 1969. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. As an indication of White’s community concern, also see an exchange between William Lindsay White and the J.C. Nichols Company discussing downtown redevelopment. In William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

friends and family on Christmas day.” He suggested that “maybe you would want to give one of your extra cans of nuts or candy to this poor guy. That’s up to you.”<sup>109</sup>

Emporians responded enthusiastically to White’s program and expressed heartfelt desire to help make Christmas brighter for local soldiers. Jeri Ann Facklam wrote White that “Our family held a family conference and decided that we would like to send some candy and nuts to the boys in Vietnam.” Each member of the family contributed a portion of the necessary funds. Jeri Ann explained that after “2 hours of babysitting my sister, Peggy, and I could each contribute a dollar. For my brother, Lennie, one weeks allowance makes his share. The remaining \$2.44 is from my mother and daddy. We are glad we can help make Christmas happier for some boy in Vietnam.”<sup>110</sup> Another wrote, “Here is my check for a very merry Christmas and a happy New Year to our boys in Vietnam. I’m so grateful to you for making this possible.” She told White that “we know what they are doing for us and for the future of the world. May God’s blessing rest upon each and every one of them, they deserve so much.”<sup>111</sup> White answered most of these letters with a simple expression of thanks and an inquiry as to whether the soldier had written a letter in reply. If so, White wrote a second letter to the family asking if the letter might be published in the *Gazette*. At times, however, circumstances prompted White to decline donations. For example, once the paper had completed the purchasing and sending of gifts, White returned additional donations. He explained to J. J. Morris that “I’ve instructed everybody at the Gazette to be very careful that this operation did not show a profit, or otherwise we could be accused of fattening ourselves by exploiting the public and swindling soldiers.” Thus, “We

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<sup>109</sup> William Lindsay White. Christmas letter to soldiers. 22 December 1969. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>110</sup> Jeri Ann Facklam to William Lindsay White. Undated. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>111</sup> Ida M. Franz to William Lindsay White. 8 December 1969. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

finally returned enough checks, including yours, to insure the fact that the operation would show a small loss.”<sup>112</sup>

White took his community responsibility seriously, not only to inform the public about local and national events through his newspaper, but also to strengthen community bonds and work with other area newspapers on programs such as the holiday gift program. He also helped other local papers implement similar programs. White described the program’s genesis and inner workings to the editor of the *Council Grove Republican*. He wrote that “about the first of December it occurred to me that it might be nice to start a fund to send, to every local boy serving in Vietnam last Christmas, some kind of a little present from the Old Home Town.” In order to properly plan such a program, White explained that he used the expertise of the Red Cross to decide what to purchase and “concluded that the proper present might be a big can of Stover’s candy and a can of Planter’s fanciest peanuts.” Both were chosen because “they were available in cans, having been told that nothing else stands up to the hot humid climate of Vietnam.”<sup>113</sup> White suggested that the Council Grove editor contact the point person on the program, Ray Call, for more information on how to implement a similar program. He wrote, “If you are having trouble filling your program, I think that Ray Call, our City Editor, who handled most of the project, could give the Editors a very good run down on something which next year they well could copy, which is easy to do.”

White concluded the program not only benefited local families and soldiers but “created a tidal wave of good will for the paper – a fringe benefit which was not expected.” He continued,

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<sup>112</sup> William Lindsay White to J. J. Morris. 6 January 1970. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>113</sup> William Lindsay White to Don A. McNeil, 7 January 1970. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas. McNeil worked for the *Council Grove Republican*.

“I know of nothing we have done in recent years which has been so popular, and all of it unexpected.”<sup>114</sup>

## Conclusion

William Lindsay White parlayed his opportunity with *Reader's Digest*, his famous name, and his ownership of the *Emporia Gazette* into a broad national platform. Through assignments from *Reader's Digest*, White's writing reached a wide variety of readers and he routinely used Emporia and the Midwest as frames of reference for his reaction to other peoples, governmental structures, and economies. White envisioned his writing not only as a source of personal profit but also as a patriotic means of improving American culture. He hoped to personally educate his audience on world events, America's role in foreign lands, and the commonality among all peoples. Though White often identified shortcomings within other societies, he did not directly use race or ethnicity to criticize non-Americans. He believed that everyone could prosper under democratic government, capitalistic exchange, and free expression.

In 1969, White conveyed to DeWitt Wallace his disproving assessment of American periodicals. He explained that:

When I look around at magazines, it seems to me that the world is falling to pieces. Harry Luce, who got off the ground at about the same time you and Lila did, was a power for righteousness in his way. But look at Time now! It seems to be edited by a bunch of well-meaning young queers who are going fashionably left. . . Newsweek was always leftish, and I think is gaining today only because Time is beginning to veer in the same direction.<sup>115</sup>

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<sup>114</sup> William Lindsay White to Don A. McNeil, 7 January 1970. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.

<sup>115</sup> William Lindsay White to DeWitt Wallace, 28 November 1969. William Lindsay White Papers, Spencer Research Library, University of Kansas.



Social and political tastes changed dramatically over White's four decade career. By the late 1960s, White's emphasis on self-reliance, individualism, unquestioning patriotism, and the positive influence of America on a global scale were no longer in the mainstream. Despite declining national popularity and fewer of his publications appearing in the pages of *Reader's Digest*, White maintained access to the public sphere. He had never lost his connection to the local community of Emporia and he continued to successfully manage the *Emporia Gazette*. The enduring connection between White and the local community allowed him an enduring public platform and sustained access to the public sphere.

## **Conclusion: Assessing Influence and Legacy**

Emanuel Haldeman-Julius, Chester Franklin, and William Lindsay White believed a burgeoning twentieth-century American public sphere provided them a mechanism of influence. Through writings focused on capitalism, racial equality, organized labor, the role of religion, and the individual's centrality, each man established a conduit through which his thoughts, opinions, and analysis regularly reached large audiences. Their strategies for trying to influence public opinion and move America in a positive direction, however, differed according to their respective backgrounds, political agendas, and local communities. Collective consideration of the circumstances that influenced their careers, and the strategies by which they pursued readers, provides to a broader understanding of how the public sphere developed within America.

The twentieth-century American public sphere gave publishers new pathways to prominence, an ability to cultivate audiences based on ideology, and wide latitude to express personal visions for America. Each of these publishers sought the widespread distribution of these ideas for the often overlapping purposes of financial gain, public influence, and community creation. Haldeman-Julius founded a publishing company in 1919 in order to achieve complete editorial freedom and used mass-marketing and mail order to spread his materials nationwide. In addition to creating a means of accessing the public sphere, bypassing an unsympathetic local population, and for broadly distributing his writing, Haldeman-Julius hoped his publications would unite individuals who had been positioned outside the societal mainstream due to lack of education, ethnicity, radical politics, or an opposition to organized religion. His periodicals often published reader letters, and the voluminous catalog he compiled offered works focused on everything from limericks to socialism.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, Chester Franklin focused locally on the

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<sup>1</sup> The catalog of Pittsburg State's Axe Library provides a fairly comprehensive view of Haldeman-Julius's more than 1,000 Little Blue Book offerings. See [http://axe.pittstate.edu/spcoll/HaldemanJulius\\_LBB01.dot](http://axe.pittstate.edu/spcoll/HaldemanJulius_LBB01.dot).

growing, ethnically united, African-American community in Kansas City. Franklin believed the surest path to equality lay in adopting the values of hard work, discipline, and self-reliance. He further believed that his paper could help new arrivals embody these characteristics. Franklin embraced a broader agenda and gradual expansion after his paper achieved success within Kansas City. Finally, William Lindsay White catapulted from his father's Kansas newspaper onto a national platform with *Reader's Digest*, a publication that was founded three years after Haldeman-Julius Publications and the *Kansas City Call*. White balanced Emporia issues alongside national concerns throughout his career and advocated self-reliance, anti-communism, and racial equality. Despite the fact that Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White all sought national audiences, their local communities played a significant role in their success or failure. Collectively these individuals demonstrate the relationship between a burgeoning national public sphere and the lasting influence of local community.

Understanding the interplay between a public sphere that expanded rapidly and local communities that retained influence requires a theoretical framework based on Jürgen Habermas, Thomas Bender, and Benedict Anderson. Habermas believed that the public sphere functioned through face-to-face interactions and provided citizens of democratic societies an outlet to illuminate societal problems and publicize possible solutions. Thomas Bender argued that the concept of community must be understood as a period-specific historical variable. Anderson's "imagined communities" model demonstrates the role of common values and experience within modern nations. The composite framework that results from a combination of these theorists moves past the limitations of physical location and face-to-face interaction. Based on the careers of Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White, my research points to an American public sphere that consists of information exchange platforms with overlapping national and local audiences.

Further, I argue that by publisher interaction with readers these outlets have formed conceptual communities through cultural unity, shared expectations or desires, and political ideology. The modern, expanded, national public sphere allows Americans to belong, simultaneously, to multiple communities.

### **The Changing Face of Community**

Robert Wiebe's "island communities" thesis remains a powerful metaphor for understanding the changes in location and connectivity experienced during the early twentieth century. As Americans pushed into urban areas, many leaving farms to search for factory work, others as arriving from overseas along the eastern seaboard, they rapidly came into contact with new groups, perspectives, and values. Emanuel Haldeman-Julius and Chester Franklin entered the public sphere in 1919, during a period of population expansion and social upheaval. Lynn Dumenil asserts that "the census data formed part of the contemporary assessment of the growth and influence of cities. Observers of the 1920s had a sense—at times oversimplified—that they were witnessing an urban/rural conflict, a battle between forces of change and forces of reaction."<sup>2</sup> A generation later, William Lindsay White used familial lineage and *Reader's Digest* to gain access to the public sphere. Whereas demographics and a conflict between tradition and modernity had affected the early careers of Haldeman-Julius and Franklin, as White entered the public sphere America was adjusting to the outpouring of patriotism and conservatism associated with World War II and the Cold War.

The Kansas audiences available to Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White directly influenced the strategies each man used to access the public sphere. In 1920, the year after Haldeman-Julius and Franklin began publication, the state of Kansas boasted just shy of two

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<sup>2</sup> Dumenil, 11.

million residents and made up 1.67 percent of the total U.S. population. While the state population continued to expand over subsequent decades, Kansas's total share of the country's population declined rapidly.<sup>3</sup> Haldeman-Julius's Crawford County lacked an urban center, and the majority of its residents held conservative views that predisposed them against his radical political and social views. The county's population peaked in 1920 at 61,800 residents.<sup>4</sup> To compensate for the relatively small local audience, Haldeman-Julius turned towards mass-marketing and mail-order distribution for his readership. The establishment of a new publishing venture by Haldeman-Julius manufactured a loyal readership where none had existed and reflected his conscious effort to create a national community based on shared ideology and mutual need. After Haldeman-Julius's death in 1950, the company ceased publication of his periodicals and sought to liquidate previously printed books. His son's conviction on obscenity charges explored in Chapter four further dimmed the company's future and ultimately led to bankruptcy.

In contrast, the growth of an African American community in Kansas City during the early 1900s not only provided Chester Franklin a racially united audience as well as a base of readers with a common cause. Through support of African-American equality and education, Franklin expanded the *Kansas City Call* throughout the Midwest. Wyandotte County, the Kansas county most directly bordering the Kansas City metro area, continued to grow during Franklin's career and housed 165,318 residents by the time of the Kansas City Centennial and his retirement in 1950. Founded to unite a community, push for equality, and publicize an overlooked minority,

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<sup>3</sup>*Kansas Statistical Abstract 2010*, 45<sup>th</sup> ed. September 2011, Institute for Policy and Social Research, University of Kansas, <http://www.ipsr.ku.edu/ksdata/ksah/KSA45.pdf> (accessed February 9, 2012), 385. Also see: Miner, 405. Miner argues that "the Progressive Era was another peak, right in the midst of all the controversial Kansas reform. The state grew 15 percent between 1900 and 1910 but then settled down to a 4 to 6 percent growth rate, with the exception of the 1950s when it reached nearly 15 percent again."

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, By 1950 Crawford County had shrunk to only 40,231 and According to the latest census, it currently houses only 39,134 residents.

Franklin's paper remained relevant only as long as African Americans were left out of dominant publications. Thus, as integration was gradually achieved, publications dedicated solely to African American interests began to decline. *Kansas City Call* subscription numbers reflect this trend. The paper reached its peak readership of 40,189 in 1949, but dropped to only 10,719 in 1979.<sup>5</sup> Though the *Kansas City Call* continues to publish weekly, its reach and influence has waned considerably since the mid-twentieth century. Patrick Washburn connects the gradual success of the civil rights movement, ironically, with the decline of the African American newspaper. As a result of increasing opportunities for African Americans, Washburn argues that "the white press . . . began hiring away some of the best young black journalistic talent in order to cover the black community." Stemming from this competition for news about the African American community, African American audiences were faced with a choice and increasingly began purchasing white-owned papers.<sup>6</sup>

The current incarnation of the paper is edited and published by Donna Stewert.<sup>7</sup> Its content, which has become more locally focused since the 1950s, continues to focus on the African American community in Kansas City. The paper states that "today as in the past, *The Call*'s coverage includes events in the Black community of Kansas City and the nation, news of local churches and upcoming performances, sports, graduations, marriages, and deaths." Further, the paper's website puts forth a platform identical to the one espoused by Franklin and states that

The Call believes that American can best lead the world away from racial and national antagonism when it accords to every man, regardless of race, color, or creed, his human and legal rights. Hating no man, fearing no man, THE CALL strives to help every man in the firm belief that all are hurt as long as anyone is held back.<sup>8</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> Slavens, 200.

<sup>6</sup> Washburn, 199-200.

<sup>7</sup> "Home Page," February 20, 2012, <http://kccall.com/about.php>.

<sup>8</sup> "Platform," February 20, 2012, <http://kccall.com/platform.php>.

The *Kansas City Call* has also taken its coverage of the Kansas City community online with a website highlighting feature stories and other information.

William Lindsay White balanced local and national issues through both the *Emporia Gazette* and *Reader's Digest*. White viewed the city of Emporia as a reliable and loyal audience as he cultivated national exposure, and as his involvement with *Reader's Digest* waned as leadership of the publication shifted and the editorial tone of the magazine evolved in the mid-1960s, White published more frequently in the *Emporia Gazette* and spent more time in his hometown.<sup>9</sup> Centered in Emporia, but living throughout Lyon County, White's local audience boasted 186,845 residents 1970. Within the community, William Lindsay White's contribution to Emporia has been most directly memorialized in the renaming of the town's auditorium in 1972. The City Commission renamed the building the "W. L. White Arena" to recognize White for "the significant work he did for *The Emporia Gazette*."<sup>10</sup> In the years following White's death in 1973, Lyon County continued to grow and reached a peak population in 2000 of 35, 935. Today 33,690 residents call it home.<sup>11</sup> Despite a significantly reduced national profile and demographic

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<sup>9</sup> Jernigan, 267-273. For information on the shift within *Reader's Digest*, see Peter Canning, *American Dreamers: The Wallaces and the Reader's Digest: An Insider's Story*. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1999). Particularly important is DeWitt Wallace's declining role in the magazine's leadership. White felt quite close to Wallace, who had signed him in 1941, and as Wallace moved away from the magazine White increasingly felt like an outsider.

<sup>10</sup> The City of Emporia, "W. L. White Arena," <http://wlwarena.emporia-kansas.gov/index.php/history>. Construction of the building began in 1938 and was completed in 1940. Initially the building was known only as the Civic Auditorium. It continues to host various functions and local sporting events, notably Emporia State University men's and women's basketball as well as state-level high school tournaments. Interestingly, the city speaks of the building as though it has always been named after White. For example, the arena's website explains the building's history by stating that "in May of 1940, the William Lindsay White auditorium was ready to be opened for the public." Examples of William Allen White memorials include the William Allen White House run by the Kansas State Historical Society, a sign on Interstate 335 alerting drivers to "Emporia, Home of William Allen White," the library in Emporia, and an elementary school in Emporia bear his name. Also see This website of the University of Kansas School of Journalism, named in honor of William Allen White, that lists various memorials <http://www.journalism.ku.edu/school/waw/memorials/memorials.html>. The school's home page, <http://www.journalism.ku.edu/school/waw/>, features a photo of William Allen White speaking to William Lindsay White.

<sup>11</sup> *Kansas Statistical Abstract*, <http://www.ipsr.ku.edu/ksdata/ksah/KSA45.pdf>. Lyon County grew following White's death in 1973 and reached a peak population in 2000 of 35, 935. Lyon County currently contains 33,690 residents.

changes within the community of Emporia, the *Emporia Gazette* continues daily publication.

Chris Walker, grandson of William Lindsay White, inherited the publication from his mother and continues to run the operation as the fourth generation of White's to spearhead the *Gazette*. Like the *Kansas City Call*, the *Emporia Gazette* has moved some of its operation online.<sup>12</sup>

The Kansas location of each publisher provided a unique perspective on the social and political changes America experienced during the twentieth-century. It also, however, left each without a sizeable local audience and required each to look beyond his local community for readers. Haldeman-Julius and Franklin responded to this challenge by creating new publishing platforms, while White joined an established national publication. Without these mechanisms of publication, the writing of each man would have been limited in its distribution and influence. The geographic isolation, and the declining population, of each publisher's hometown makes their careers indicative of how the majority of Americans outside major metropolitan areas have accessed the public sphere.

### **Declining Influence**

Rapid changes within the American public sphere have not dissipated during the last few decades. Since the careers of Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White ended, the ability to create a broad audience through newspapers and books has arguably become more difficult. Readership of American newspapers has reached an all-time low and local publications have been swallowed up by corporate publishing conglomerates. The Gallup organization reported in 2008 that "among daily news sources, only cable and Internet news have shown significant gains in

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<sup>12</sup> Chris Walker (editor and owner of the *Emporia Gazette*), email correspondence with the author, February 2012.



popularity since 2006, while all other media are stable or declining.”<sup>13</sup> In addition, Gallup found that the declining popularity of newspapers impacted both national and local publications and also extended to national print periodicals. Gallup reported in 2008 that “the Internet has shown the biggest increase in popularity as a news source, with 31% of Americans now saying it is a daily news source.” The 2008 survey “marks a nearly 50% increase since 2006 and a more than 100% increase from 2002. Use of the Internet as a news source has increased each time Gallup has asked about it, beginning in 1995.”<sup>14</sup> In 2009, Pew Research Center reported that “in 2008, online readers comprised more than a third of all newspaper readers; two years earlier, fewer than a quarter of newspaper readers viewed them on the Web. This is being driven by a substantial shift in how younger generations read newspapers.”<sup>15</sup> Authors today would find it impossible to emulate the successful careers of Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, or White and the avenues of public sphere access significantly altered.

The contemporary emphasis on visual productions and electronic-based forms of media within the American public sphere has also impacted the ability of individuals to freely express their unique perspectives and to garner sizeable audiences. Paul Starr points to the shift from print culture to electronic-based communication as severely limiting the ideological diversity within American media. Starr argues that “during the nineteenth century, political views circulated via a network (the Post Office) to which even radical papers enjoyed a right of

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<sup>13</sup> Lymari Morales, “Cable, Internet News Sources Growing in Popularity,” *Gallup*, December 15, 2008, <http://www.gallup.com/poll/113314/Cable-Internet-News-Sources-Growing-Popularity.aspx>. For a more historical overview of the declining influence of newspapers and print media, see: James Brian McPherson, *Journalism at the End of the American Century, 1965-Present*. The History of American Journalism Series, No. 7. Ed. James D. Startt, Wm. David Sloan. (Praeger, Westport, CT: 2006). McPherson’s work is particularly helpful because it provides an overview of the field rather than a specific examination of a single publication or single luminary figure. Also, see: Pete Hamill, *News is a Verb: Journalism at the End of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*. (Baltimore Books, NY: 1998). Though this work borders on polemical, Hamill effectively charts changes with newspaper content and the increasingly entertainment drive editorial tone of many papers.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> “Newspapers Face a Challenging Calculus,” *Pew Research Center Publications*, February 26, 2009, <http://pewresearch.org/pubs/1133/decline-print-newspapers-increased-online-news>.

access.” While distribution via the mail came with peril, and in the case of Haldeman-Julius periodically impacted distribution due to content, it provided a democratization of media. Starr notes, however, that “advocates of corresponding viewpoints in the twentieth century had no comparable right to get on the radio. And while the Supreme Court provided stronger protections of political dissent beginning in the 1930s, radio and movies were deemed outside the scope of the First Amendment.”<sup>16</sup> Access to television distribution and radio waves increasingly depends upon governmental licensing, corporate favor, and sophisticated technological equipment that prevents individuals from accessing the airwaves.

Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White hoped that their writing could expose Americans to the concerns of their fellow citizens and create a nation mirroring their own political and social views. They utilized local and national print periodicals, self-published and nationally distributed, as the primary conduit between themselves and their audience. Within the contemporary public sphere, however, print media no longer serves as the primary mechanism of information distribution. Online forums, an array of topic specific websites, and aggregator sites have replaced newspapers and the nightly network news as sources of information among the majority of Americans.

### **The Facebook Community**

No clearer connection exists between the careers Haldeman-Julius, Franklin, and White than the desire to establish a sense of community for readers separated by geography and then to use the resulting ideological unity to influence opinion. Contemporary shifts toward online information distribution have certainly shifted the locus of community, but these changes have

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<sup>16</sup> Starr, 401. For a more detailed analysis of how motion pictures have impacted American history, see Robert Sklar, *Movie-Made America: A Cultural History of American Movies*. (Vintage, NY: 1994).

not eliminated the ability of independent publishers and public sphere upstarts to influence public opinion. The current balance between governmental protection of media free expression and market forces that drive innovation continues to value experimentation. Starr argues that

Sometimes even a single influential work – a book, a movie, a song – can give the latent public its voice and bring it into full awareness of itself. The discovery of a new market may thereby trigger public (and private) self-discovery and alter what politics is about. While most writers and publishers and others involved in making such choices mostly stick to familiar terrain, the industry’s hunger for new products is a spur to cultural as well as economic risk-taking.<sup>17</sup>

In other words, corporate monoliths seldom create new audiences or ideological communities, but the inherent desire for innovation provides entrepreneurs fertile ground. Ironically, the move toward visual and electronic communication that has closed the door of traditional media for upstart individuals has opened new avenues for audience and community creation. Online social networking sites, most notably Facebook, provide a ready-made mechanism for uniting individuals across geographic boundaries and forming a sense of community through common interests and ideology.

Admirers of Haldeman-Julius have founded a Facebook group “for fans and collectors of the various 3½ × 5” booklets published by Emanuel Haldeman-Julius (and son).” The “group info” section alerts members to a partner website for additional content and encourages them to “Meet. Discuss. Enjoy!”<sup>18</sup> Similarly, the *Kansas City Call*’s website prominently displays a section dedicated to Facebook’s “Kansas City CALL Newspaper” group. This section is complete with photographs of group members and a link that takes visitors directly to the

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<sup>17</sup> Starr, 401.

<sup>18</sup> “Fans of the Little Blue Books”. [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), (accessed February 23, 2012). The Group Info section lists the various incarnations of Haldeman-Julius’s periodicals and also his book business. This section states that “This group is associated with <http://haldeman-julius.org/> so please come see us sometime!” Haldeman-Julius.org contains a profile of Haldeman-Julius, detailed analysis of his publications and tips on how to identify each type of publication, links to other sites of interest to Haldeman-Julius fans, leads on where to purchase Haldeman-Julius publications, and database of the titles published by Haldeman-Julius. In addition, the site directs readers to articles focused on Haldeman-Julius’s personal politics, life, and career achievements.

Facebook page where information regarding the company's profile, leadership, and mission is easily accessed.<sup>19</sup> In addition, the *Kansas City Call* Facebook page allows the company to post photo graphs and links to important stories; readers can post messages and identify other readers.<sup>20</sup> In contrast to the rather robust online presence of Haldeman-Julius supporters and the current incarnation of the *Kansas City Call*, no independently created Facebook fan page exists for William Lindsay White. A Facebook Community Page has been created that houses a Wikipedia summary of his life and allows Facebook users to "like" the page, but users do not have the ability to comment on the page, post items of interest for other users, or even see other users who have "liked" the site.<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> [www.kccall.com](http://www.kccall.com). Stories can only be accessed by subscribers and the site offers both a trial subscription and 1 year subscription at a rate of \$39.95. The online masthead is simply large red letters reading "The Call" and smaller letters identifying the paper as "Southwest's Leading Weekly, Est. 1919." Alongside is a smiling picture of Lucile Bluford. References to Chester Franklin, however, are not lacking from the Call's online presence. An "About the Call" section provides the paper's background and details how Franklin founded the paper, pushed the paper towards success, and shaped the paper's editorial content. Additionally, the section entitled "Call Platform" prominently displays a photo of Chester Franklin and identifies him as the paper's founder.

<sup>20</sup> "Kansas City Call," [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com), <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Kansas-City-CALL-Newspaper/377380053241#!/pages/Kansas-City-CALL-Newspaper/377380053241?sk=info> (accessed February 23, 2012). The group restates the paper's mission verbatim, but also includes an overview which states that "Established in 1919, THE CALL is Kansas City largest paid circulation weekly newspaper serving the influential and desirable black communities of Kansas City, Mo., and Kansas City, Ks." Additionally, the page provides email addresses for submitting editorials and advertisements, and reminds patrons that "We offer a variety of different advertisement LOCAL and NATIONAL." While the content posted on the paper's official website requires a subscription, the Facebook page allows anyone to post messages.

<sup>21</sup> [www.facebook.com](http://www.facebook.com). (accessed February 23, 2012), "William Lindsay White." The difference between a fan page and community page is that a fan page has been independently created by a Facebook user and provides much greater latitude in the content provided and the level of interaction between users who "like" the page. In contrast, a community page is created on an administrative level and is essentially an encyclopedia type entry which provides a brief synopsis of the subject. Facebook users may "like" the page but cannot independently post to the page. The Community Page dedicated to William Lindsay White only has three "likes." In contrast, supporters of White's father, William Allen White, have created multiple Facebook pages celebrating his achievements and promoting his legacy. For example, see the results of a search for William Allen White on Facebook. This reveals a page dedicated to the William Allen White House, a page created to look like William Allen White is a Facebook user, a fan page of William Allen White the politician, and a page designed to publicized the William Allen White literary award.

## Local vs. National in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century

As America moves into the second decade of the twenty-first century, the public sphere continues to consist of overlapping local and national communities. Despite the decline in daily readership, websites and Facebook fan groups have not completely replaced daily distributed newspapers and periodicals. Geographic location remains a constant source of identity for many, and the sense of group membership and community provided by local newspapers stems from a familiarity with one another not easily replicated online. Even though the nationally distributed publications of Haldeman-Julius included reader questions, addresses or often hometowns were excluded because a reader of the *Appeal to Reason* in Ohio was unlikely to run into a reader from California or Florida. In other words, Haldeman-Julius thought of community membership on a national level. Yet, both Chester Franklin and William Lindsay White regularly published reader letters that included hometowns and often street addresses. Within African-American communities in Kansas or Missouri, and within the town of Emporia, one-on-one interaction was much more likely and an address gave readers an ability to communicate with one another.

Community newspapers continue to publicize content that appeals to a segment of the American public united by geography rather than common interest. Recently, White's grandson published articles in the *Emporia Gazette* focused on the Emporia State University debate squad, the Emporia Friends of the Zoo Auction, and the circulation of a local petition.<sup>22</sup> Despite the fact that all Emporians are not directly interested in these activities, the paper published them because these events speak to the unifying factor of locality and appeal to a broad cross section of community members. On one hand, this type of location-specific information vastly limits the appeal of community newspapers because outsiders find the content banal. On the other hand,

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<sup>22</sup> *Emporia Gazette* homepage, [www.emporiagazette.com](http://www.emporiagazette.com), accessed on February 27, 2012.

stories centered on local events provide Emporia residents a common ground and a set of shared events that can be referenced in everyday interactions enhancing a sense of community.

Online forums cannot approach the continued reach of daily newspapers in local communities like Emporia because the information they provide must be specifically oriented around a single strand of common interest. An online forum in the Fans of Haldeman-Julius Facebook group must be limited to issues directly pertaining to Haldeman-Julius and his work because that is what unites all of the group's members. A recent member started a thread that linked a website featuring quotations from famous individuals about Haldeman-Julius. Another asked fellow group members for advice on what to do with Haldeman-Julius titles she owns.<sup>23</sup> These items might seem trivial to the general public, but to people interested in Haldeman-Julius and his publications they are quite interesting.<sup>24</sup>

Community newspapers based on geography and ethnicity continue to provide publishers access to the contemporary American public sphere. To some extent, they will probably always exist because physical surroundings and geographic location are constant sources of commonality. The possibilities of online platforms to unite people across the country, or across the world, however, have opened up new opportunities for public sphere influence and community creation.<sup>25</sup> Though the publishing company founded by Haldeman-Julius no longer

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<sup>23</sup> Jason Ramsay-Brown posted at 4:42 p.m. on February 21<sup>st</sup> that "More than a few discussions have broken out on this wall regarding the famous folks who have praised the Little Blue Books. We figured our website visitors might find some entertainment in an ongoing "who's who" of some of these individuals, so here it is: <http://www.haldeman-julius.org/historical-notes/famous-fans.html>; Donna Terracina Emnett posted at 1:54 p.m. on February 15<sup>th</sup> that "Thanks for letting me join. I have Little Blue Books NO. 381 Wit and Wisdom of Dickens and 3 166, English as She is Spoke by Mark Twain. Not sure what to do with it. Copyright, 1923, Haldeman-Julius Company. I also have a set of books by New Era Library Copyright 1933. Not sure about them either." Mistakes in original. Accessed on February 27, 2012 at 5:03 p.m.

<sup>24</sup> Brown's post generated 15 comments within the first 26 hours.

<sup>25</sup> McPherson, 183. He argues that the internet allows readers to "access news media around the world, reading their morning newspaper and any of thousands of other newspapers online. They could read news sites produced in other nations . . . readers could even bypass the news media" and go directly to subject of news reports. In addition, see: Mary Chayko, *Connecting: How we Form Social Bonds and Communities In the Internet Age*, (State University of New York Press, Albany: 2002), 2. Chayko argues that despite modern social forces that divide

operates, his belief in the power of information to form borderless communities looms as the dominant method of public sphere discourse in the new millennium. Electronic communication has broken down geographic barriers and the internet provides a mechanism through which individuals can communicate with groups of like-minded people regardless of location. More important, Haldeman-Julius's goals of providing readers with easy access to reliable information, an outlet for issues omitted from traditional news sources, and an ability to feel part of a community are all realized via online portals.

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people based on time, space, and "technological change," humans retain the ability to connect with others on a social and intellectual level. Her work provides a useful framework for understanding how the internet impacts community creation and she explores "strong, long-lasting sociomental bonds, weaker and perhaps more fleeting sociomental connections, and clusters and groupings of such connections and bonds into what I call communities of the mind."

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